# AN INVESTIGATION OF BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF CONSERVATIVE PROTESTANT PARENTS AND THE CULTURAL APPLICABILITY OF CHILD PARENT RELATIONSHIP THERAPY

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The purpose of this study was to conduct a survey to identify the beliefs and practices of conservative Protestant parents, which assisted in clarifying the assertions in the current literature regarding conservative Protestant parenting. Additionally, this researcher sought to determine the applicability of child parent relationship therapy (CPRT), a filial therapy model based upon the principles of child centered play therapy, for conservative Protestant parents by ascertaining the need for cultural modifications. Beliefs and practices of conservative Protestants were measured using the Protestant Parenting Inventory (PPI), an original instrument developed through a series of focus groups and pilot testings.

The population comprised 148 mothers and fathers from 4 Southern Baptist churches in and around the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex. Exploratory factor analysis was applied to the data in order to increase internal consistency estimates and percent of explained variance. Criterion coding of demographic data allowed a multiple regression analysis to determine which demographic variables were significant predictors of participant responses on the PPI. Descriptive statistics allowed the researcher to investigate the compatibility of conservative Protestants and CPRT. Results of this study both confirm and refute past findings regarding conservative Protestants. Results also revealed the need for some cultural modifications to CPRT in order to make it an acceptable parenting resource for conservative Protestant parents.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

The United States was founded on principles of religious freedom. The Founding Fathers recognized the importance of religion in the lives of individuals and created a nation that would protect an individual's pursuit of God through the medium of religion, and religion continues to play an integral role in the lives of many Americans. Recent Gallup Poll surveys revealed that 60% of Americans believe that religion is very important in their personal lives, with an additional 26% believing that religion is at least fairly important. Forty-five percent of Americans also identified themselves as "born-again" or evangelical and 63% reported believing that the Bible can answer most of the questions concerning life's problems (Gallup Poll Organization, 2001).

In recent years, as researchers have become increasingly interested in the topics of religion and spirituality, operational definitions of these terms have arisen. Prominent authors in the field of religion and spirituality in counseling and psychotherapy have acknowledged the difficulty in defining and differentiating these terms (Kelly, 1995; Richards & Bergin, 1997). They describe spirituality as an individual's personal perception of connectedness to the greater whole of the universe, and religion as a system of beliefs, attitudes, and practices commonly associated with an institution or group of individuals who express their devotion to a specific idea or holy being. However, these authors emphasize the commonalities between the two specifically that religion and spirituality transcend the objective, material world, yet influence the lives of people in dramatic ways (Kelly, 1995). Other researchers have ascribed to them polarized definitions (Pargament & Mahoney, 2002). Religion has been referred to as

rigid, limiting, and impersonal, whereas spirituality is seen as freeing, subjective, and a means to self-actualization (Pargament, 1999). Religion plays a significant role in the lives of many individuals. Although ascertaining its impact is complex and difficult, religion has the potential to provide a resource of support and hope (Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar, & Swank, 2001).

Dollahite (1998) attended to the historical significance of the role of religious organizations in providing child-rearing training and advice to parents, finding that Protestant parents have historically sought out parenting advice from religious leaders. Their continued reliance on religious authorities for parenting training, as evidenced by numerous resources for Protestant parents, may be due in part to tradition or possibly to their desire to integrate their religious beliefs into their parenting practices.

The majority of literature regarding Christian parenting exists in popular books and provides directives to Christian parents on how to parent their children from a biblical perspective (Sweeney, Homeyer, & Pavlishina, 2000). Little empirical research exists concerning the beliefs and practices of Christians in their roles as parents. Much of the research that does exist has focused on superficial aspects of Christian behavior, such as church attendance, church membership, and denomination affiliation, or it contains biases and methodological flaws (Bartkowski & Xu, 2000). Some mainstream parenting experts have spoken out against conservative Christian parenting practices, specifically the emphasis on obedience and the use of corporal punishment (Dyslin & Thomsen, 2005). A thorough review of the literature revealed no studies that provided in-depth investigation of the beliefs and practices of Christian parents.

Boggs (1983) contended that all parenting advice is rooted in an assumption of truth about children and parenting. Value-free parenting does not exist; however, some authors have tended to ignore this idea and neglect to provide a rationale for the parenting directives they put forth in their parenting manuals. Boggs, therefore, implored parent educators to investigate their own beliefs as well as the belief systems of the parents that they desire to impact.

Awareness of the growing diversification of the cultures within the United States and the importance of working with all individuals in a respectful and nonjudgmental manner are reflected in the ethical codes of the American Counseling Association (ACA, 2005) and the American Psychological Association (APA, 2002) (Sue, Bingham, Porche-Burke, & Vasquez, 1999). Both ethical codes require counselors and psychologists to respect and not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, gender, and cultural factors, including religion (ACA, 2005; APA, 2002). The authors of the ACA code require counselors to further respect differences by taking action to understand the cultural perspectives of their clients and to respect the different counseling approaches of their colleagues that may be rooted in their cultural traditions (ACA, 2005).

Multicultural counseling experts have argued that individuals who profess a strong religious affiliation encompass a unique cultural group (Bartkowski, 1995; Stander, Piercy, Mackinnon, & Helmeke, 1994). Researchers emphasized the need to gain a respectful understanding and appreciation for different cultures, including individuals of different ethnicities, races, sexual orientations, and religious affiliations (ACA, 2005). Awareness of and respect for diversity of all types are essential in the

effort to avoid intentional and inadvertent discrimination and to work effectively with clients and colleagues (Baumrind, 1997; Sue et al., 1999; Westwood & Ishiyama, 1990; Wilcox, 2002). Researchers Griffith and Griffith (2002) highlighted the need for respect of religious and spiritual differences, as well as an integration of these into counseling and psychotherapy. They investigated of the impact of religion and spirituality on the lives of individuals who had experienced violence and torture as a result of war. One research participant expressed appreciation of his experience in therapy by emphasizing that all therapists should understand both the body and the mind if they really want to help people.

Upon extensive review of literature related to religion, parenting, and families, Mahoney et al. (2001) concluded that religion plays a significant and positive role in the lives of families. However, they pointed to important limitations of the research, such as lack of in-depth research, methodological flaws, ambiguous results, and confusion related to applying research to real-life settings. Therefore, researchers emphasized a need for broader scope, greater depth, and a conceptual focus for future research in the area of religion and families to help clarify and substantiate current findings (Mahoney et al., 2001).

In the early 1960s, Bernard Guerney, and later with his wife, Louise Guerney (L. Guerney, 2000), developed an innovative treatment modality that utilized parents as therapeutic agents in working with their children. In an effort to meet the needs of a growing population of children with emotional problems and to make efficient use of mental health professionals' time, the Guerneys developed filial therapy and targeted its use to children with behavioral and emotional problems (B.J. Guerney, 1964). Others

later recognized the potential benefits of filial therapy as a parent-child relationship-enhancing tool.

Landreth (2002) supported this idea and made filial therapy more readily available and usable to parents by modifying the Guerneys' original filial format. Landreth developed a structured 10-week format called child parent relationship therapy (CPRT), which involved group process, didactic teaching, and experiential learning (Landreth & Bratton, 2006). Since that time, filial therapy has been utilized with a variety of population groups, including culturally different populations (Yuen, Landreth, & Baggerly, 2002). Modifications have been made to meet the unique needs of different cultural groups. Research on CPRT and modifications to this model have yielded positive results (Ray, Bratton, Rhine, & Jones, 2001; Smith & Landreth, 2003; Yuen et al., 2002).

## Statement of the Problem

The problem with which this study is concerned is the cultural applicability of child parent relationship therapy to Protestant parents. Because of the lack of research concerning Protestants, Protestant parents' beliefs about parenting, Protestant parenting practices, Protestantism as a culture, and the uncertainty of fit between Protestant parenting beliefs and practices and the underlying philosophies of child parent relationship therapy, possible cultural modifications to child parent relationship therapy for this special population are currently unknown.

## Review of Related Literature

Research in the areas of (a) religion and spirituality in counseling, (b) cultural considerations in counseling, (c) Protestant parenting, (d) play therapy, (e) filial therapy, (f) child parent relationship therapy, and (g) cultural modifications to child parent relationship therapy are discussed.

### *Religion and Spirituality in Counseling*

Although current research supports the claim that religion is a significant aspect of family life for a majority of Americans (Gallup, 2001), some researchers have argued that this topic has been covered superficially (Mahoney et al., 2001). They believe that this subject warrants more in-depth research to investigate the complexities of religion and the role it plays in the lives of parents and families (Mahoney, Pargament, Swank-Murray & Swank-Murray, 2003; Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar, & Swank, 2001). Pargament and Mahoney (2002) advocated for more in-depth, qualitative research to study the difficult-to-observe behaviors of self-professed religious and spiritual people, including their values, motivations, and cherished beliefs.

In the United States, 95% of married couples reported identification with a religious group (Mahoney et al., 2001). Their degrees of involvement in religious organizations vary, and Marks (2004) set out to identify the costs and benefits of religious identification among highly religious individuals through the use of a qualitative research design. Utilizing a purposive, clergy-referred sample of highly religious and racially diverse Christian, Muslim, Jewish, and Mormon couples, Marks conducted interviews with 12 couples with at least one child between the ages of 5 and 13.

Using analytic induction and grounded theory, Marks (2004) analyzed the data and identified common themes among the responses. Although respondents admitted that their lifestyles did not come without costs, such as misunderstanding of their beliefs from society, scheduling conflicts between religious rituals and school activities, and financial costs, they were adamant that the benefits outweighed the costs. Respondents identified some of the benefits of their highly religious beliefs, including providing a structure and rhythm to life; increasing their overall mental, spiritual, and physical quality of life; facilitating a stronger marriage; improving parent-child communication; promoting family cohesion; and bringing a sense of comfort and general relaxation to life. Marks asserted that, given these findings, religion and spirituality are often essential aspects of family life for highly religious families and, therefore, should not be ignored or avoided by therapists but, instead, used as a resource and source of comfort.

*Cultural Considerations in Counseling*

Research investigating the religious and spiritual beliefs of counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and marriage and family therapists revealed that a

statistically significant majority of mental health professionals indicated their primary religious affiliation as Protestant (34.1%). Psychologists were more likely to identify themselves as agnostic or atheist when compared to marriage and family therapists. Although the majority of the sample of mental health professionals reported that spiritual issues were important to them, they also reported little involvement in spiritual or religious practices (Walker, Gorsuch, & Tan, 2004).

Westwood and Ishiyama (1990) emphasized the importance of effective communication as part of the foundation for successful counseling. Due to culturally laden meanings within verbal and nonverbal communication, counselors should take care to facilitate cultural awareness and sensitivity with their clients. Westwood and Ishiyama proposed didactic education, research, and involvement with culturally diverse clients to encourage therapist understanding of culturally different language, metaphors, values, and worldviews (Westwood & Ishiyama, 1990).

In reaction to the continued lack of adequate multicultural training among psychological training programs and the resulting unawareness among practitioners, psychologists have assumed the challenge to educate mental health professionals on the importance of multiculturalism (Sue et al., 1999). Although conflict has existed related to the scope of the definition of multiculturalism, psychologists have asserted that the term must include a broad range of racial and cultural differences, including sexual orientation, religion, and class, in order to reduce debates over rights within oppressed groups. By uniting groups of individuals who have endured discrimination, the multicultural ideal of standing against any group that denies rights to another group is demonstrated (Sue et al., 1999).

Other researchers have argued that the trend among psychologists to ignore spiritual issues, to pathologize individuals who have strong religious or spiritual beliefs, or to treat spirituality and religiosity as symptoms of more complex problems may be due in part to several factors (Pargament & Mahoney, 2002). Religion and spirituality are subjective phenomena, often misunderstood by mental health professionals who commonly express lower levels of religiousness and spirituality when compared to the general public (Walker et al., 2004). Also, religious institutions and social scientists have often promoted differing viewpoints on frequently debated topics such as roles in marriage, families, parenting, and morality. However, religion and spirituality are integral components of American culture (Gallup, 2001; Kosmin, Mayer, & Keysar, 2001; Walker et al., 2004).

In an effort to gain information regarding therapists' perspectives of the legitimacy of integrating religion and spiritual issues into therapy, researchers surveyed a random sample of members of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (Carlson, Kirkpatrick, Hecker, & Killmer, 2002). Researchers adapted their questions from previous surveys designed to ascertain opinions regarding the importance of religion and spiritual issues in therapy. Participants responded to questions in a 5-point Likert scale format (Carlson et al., 2002). The returned surveys reflected a response rate of 38%, with 56% of the respondents reporting Protestantism as their primary religious affiliation. Ninety-six percent indicated that they believed a connection exists between spiritual health and mental health. Although 84% of respondents indicated that the topic of spirituality is appropriate in therapy, 54%

indicated that they needed or desired more training in order to confidently integrate religion and spiritual issues into their work with clients (Carlson et al., 2002).

Bartkowski (1995) suggested that past investigations of Protestant parenting practices may have been flawed due to the lack of a phenomenological perspective. He promoted taking an insider approach to investigate the rationale behind Protestant discipline practices. Bartkowski asserted that increased research using this more sensitive approach is needed in an effort to understand more accurately the diverse Protestant Christian perspectives on parenting and discipline. Wilcox (1998, 2002) differentiated conservative Protestant denominations from other mainline Protestant denominations by referring to them as a unique subculture with qualitatively different characteristics. Other authors promoted looking at Protestants as a unique cultural variation within the American culture. They encouraged this change as a response to the common practice of generalizing Protestant parenting beliefs and practices by studying the most popular Protestant parenting literature instead of attending to the heterogeneity within this unique and diverse group (Bartkowski & Xu, 2000; Baumrind, 1997; Doherty, Kouneski, & Erickson, 1998).

Similarly, Baumrind (1997) advocated a culturally sensitive perspective when investigating the effects of corporal punishment on children, indicating that social context and cultural differences play a role in the child's developing perspective on discipline. She noted that community and culturally acceptable practices related to children and parenting practices are not mystifying to children. In fact, children internalize these values and are, therefore, more accepting of them in practice compared to outsiders.

Other researchers have acknowledged the lack of phenomenological research on parenting and have called for empirical research to investigate parenting attitudes and behaviors in the cultural contexts in which the parents function (Doherty et al., 1998). Sherkat (2000) furthered the notion that religious individuals comprise a unique culture by identifying numerous research studies over the last several decades that have focused on linking religious factors to other life descriptors. He pointed out that the researchers of these studies failed in their attempts to uncover correlations due to a lack of understanding of religion and its unique qualities (Sherkat, 2000).

In an effort to integrate Adler's theory of individual psychology (Dinkmeyer & Sperry, 2000) with biblical principles, Kelly (1987) developed a parenting curriculum for parents who desire to use the Bible as their foundation for parenting. Kelly challenged parents to identify their perceptions of God as a father to all Christians and compare this image to their perceptions of themselves as parents. Kelly integrated concepts of Individual Psychology and mainstream literature regarding children and parenting, but still maintained that Christian parenting must include biblical concepts that are unique compared to secular principles and most other religions.

*Protestant Parenting*

The popularity of parachurch ministries, such as James Dobson's Focus on the Family and church children's ministries, and the abundance of Protestant parenting manuals available in Christian and secular bookstores provide support for the idea that many Protestant parents are actively seeking parenting advice from trusted biblically-based sources (Bartkowski & Wilcox, 2000). Authors of popular Protestant parenting literature, such as Dobson, Ezzo, Bucknam, and Campbell, have attempted to convey

biblical truths to Christian parents regarding how to raise their children. The ideals put forth in Protestant parenting literature (Campbell, 2000; Dobson, 1978, 1992; Ezzo & Bucknam, 1999) included acknowledging personal limitations, forgiveness, sacrificial love, and embodying God's grace and love through family interactions and experiences. In essence, authors of the literature asserted that it is a Protestant parent's obligation, set forth by God, to raise their children to love and trust God by modeling godly qualities (Mahoney et al., 2001).

Boggs (1983) reviewed 32 popular Protestant parenting manuals through the use of a questionnaire created by Klausner, who had previously reviewed American parenting books published from 1802 to 1967 (Boggs, 1977). According to Boggs, authors of Protestant parenting manuals proposed the view that children should be parented with the goal of facilitating them toward love and service to God, responsibility, respect for authority, self-discipline, obedience, and a concern for others. Upon review of the literature, which included James Dobson's *Dare to Discipline* and *Hide or Seek*, and Larry Christianson's (1970) *The Christian Family*, Boggs concluded that Protestant parents are expected to closely monitor their children, set limits to behavior, and consistently enforce limits through the use of preventative methods, positive reinforcement, and spanking, when other forms of discipline have been exhausted (Boggs, 1983). Mother and father share child-rearing responsibilities, but the literature indicated that mothers should retain the primary responsibility of nurturing caregiver, whereas fathers should maintain authority in the home and assume primary financial responsibility.

Boggs's study of the parenting manuals revealed a commonly promoted view of Protestant parents as ideally prepared for the demanding responsibility of parenting, highly motivated, optimistic, loving, consistent, nurturing, and continually learning. In many ways Boggs's study of Protestant parenting directives provides a stark contrast to the depiction of Protestant parenting practices in much of the professional literature that frequently emphasizes the punitive aspects of parenting (Dyslin & Thomsen, 2005), supported by popular Protestant parenting experts, without attending to such aspects as nurturance and loving responsiveness (Berliner, 1997; Boggs, 1983; Dobson, 1978, 1992). Although this research is somewhat dated, several of the parenting manuals investigated in this study have remained among the most popular Protestant parenting manuals (Bartkowski & Ellison, 1995). Therefore, the findings and implications of this study have continued usefulness.

The Bible is used as the foundational basis of truth for the directives put forth in Protestant parenting manuals (Bartkowski, 1996; Boggs, 1983, Dobson, 1992; Ezzo & Bucknam, 1999). However, even as far back as the 1960s, popular Protestant parenting experts integrated psychological principles and behavioral science into their literature (Boggs, 1983). They promoted practices consistent with mainstream psychology and child development, such as refraining from verbal threats, intimidation, and physical violence; modeling positive behaviors for children; and respecting the inherent worth of all human beings (Bartkowski & Wilcox, 2000). Although a large majority of Protestant parenting experts advocate the use of corporal punishment, they are nearly as adamant in their prohibitory stance on the use of verbal intimidation and

yelling when disciplining children (Bartkowski & Wilcox, 2000; Dobson, 1992; Ezzo & Bucknam, 1999).

As a challenge to Christian parents, Chartier (1978) presented a model of parenting based upon God's actions toward his followers, frequently referred to as "His children." Chartier proposed seven qualities of God the Father that parents should emulate as they seek to raise their children in keeping with their Protestant beliefs. He defined Christian love to include actions such as conveying care, responsiveness, discipline, generosity, respect, emotional knowing, and forgiveness. Of these, Chartier highlighted the importance of emotional knowing, or a strong foundational relationship between parent and child, as a prerequisite for the child to perceive the other six aspects of love.

Using randomly sampled data drawn from the 1987-1988 National Survey of families and households, Wilcox (1998) analyzed the survey responses of 1,280 parents of preschool children and 3,178 parents of school-age children. Parents responded with their level of agreement to theologically conservative statements. Theologically conservative parents were identified as those affiliated with the Southern Baptist, Assembly of God, Pentecostal, Missionary Alliance, and Christian Reformed denominations, who possessed beliefs about children including that they are created in God's image, that their psychological health is dependent upon a good relationship with their parents, that they deserve love and respect, and that they are born with a sinful nature that necessitates the use of corporal punishment as part of child discipline (Wilcox, 1998). Wilcox discovered that parents who professed the highest level of theological conservatism were more likely to report praising and hugging their preschool

children than parents who professed less conservative theological views. Conservative Protestant parents reportedly were 147% more likely to hug and praise their preschool children than parents who professed strong liberal theological beliefs (Wilcox, 1998). Wilcox also found that theological conservatism seemed to account for these findings more than denominational affiliation. Wilcox concluded that conservative ideology seemed to have a greater influence on reported parenting behaviors than attendance and participation in a conservative Protestant church (Wilcox, 1998).

Through the use of a qualitative survey of a subsample of the National Survey of Families and Households, Bartkowski and Xu (2000) supported their assumption that Protestant fathers balanced a value for hierarchical positions in the family with emotional support of their children. According to the study, Protestant fathers reportedly participated in statistically significantly higher levels of rule-making and rule-enforcing behaviors, were significantly more likely to respond to their children with warmth and emotional support, and were significantly more likely to express affection toward their children when compared to Catholic peers and those not affiliated with a religious denomination (Bartkowski & Xu, 2000).

Using a sample of 90 low-income, Protestant, predominantly Southern Baptist, African American families living in rural areas in the southern United States, Brody, Stoneman, and Flor (1996) investigated the influence of parental religiosity, defined by the authors as frequency of church attendance, as well as the participants' perceived importance of church attendance, on numerous aspects of family life. The researchers found that reportedly higher levels of religiosity in the parents were significantly related to reported cohesiveness among family members, low levels of conflict between

parents, and fewer behavioral problems with the children of these families (Brody et al., 1996).

Current research into the relationship between religious affiliation and the parent-child relationship among fathers revealed moderate to strong correlations between fathers' reported father-child involvement and their reported religious participation (King, 2003). Using data from the 1995 National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States, King analyzed the responses of 672 married and unmarried men between the ages of 25 and 74, with at least one biological child. The results from this nationally representative sample revealed a modest effect size between reported religiousness and involvement with children. The findings also indicated that religious fathers were more likely to report strong relationships with their children, greater planning and effort into parenting, greater involvement with their children, and openness to sharing household and child-rearing duties. Although King suggested further research to investigate the reasons why religious fathers were apparently more involved with their children, she hypothesized that the results of the study might be related to common religious teachings that promote family involvement and caring leadership in fathers. The idea that parental behaviors are influenced by religious teachings is supported by other researchers who have emphasized looking at family dynamics within the context of the religious culture in which they exist (Wilcox, 2002)

Wilcox (2002) analyzed data from a nationally representative sample of 1,019 residential fathers with school-age children living at home derived from two waves of the National Survey of Households and Families. Respondents were grouped into theological categories including conservative Protestant, including those who identified

themselves with Southern Baptist, Assembly of God, Pentecostal, Missionary Alliance, or Christian Reformed denominations; mainline Protestant, those who identified themselves with Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist, or Congregational denominations; and those who identified no religious affiliation. According to mean scores conservative Protestant fathers were significantly more likely to report spending one-on-one time with their children than mainline Protestant and unaffiliated fathers, even after controlling for extraneous variables including church attendance and civic engagement. Wilcox (2002) concluded that an emphasis on family involvement seemed to be characteristic of the conservative Protestant subculture and apparently promoted paternal involvement.

Utilizing data from the National Survey of Families and Households, distributed by the Center for Demography at the University of Wisconsin, Bartkowski and Wilcox (2002) found that parents identifying themselves as being affiliated with a Protestant denomination, which included Southern Baptist, fundamentalist Baptist, Assembly of God, Missionary Alliance, Church of the Brethren, Evangelical Free Church, Pentecostal, and Holiness churches, reportedly utilized yelling as a disciplinary measure significantly less frequently when compared to parents not affiliated with Protestant religions. Additionally, they found that parents who ascribed to conservative Protestant beliefs-- those adhering to an inerrant view of the Bible--were less likely to report yelling at their children than were other Protestant parents (Bartkowski & Wilcox, 2000).

*Corporal punishment.* The topic of corporal punishment has sparked heated debates both within religious circles and among nonreligious individuals (Capps, 1992; Dyslin & Thomsen, 2005; Lowe, 1998; Paolucci & Violato, 2004). Due to historically

flawed and opinion-based studies on this subject, debates continue, and researchers are challenged to provide relevant and methodologically sound empirical studies (Ezzo, 1998; Paolucci & Violato, 2004). Researchers have asserted a link between an emphasis on child obedience, commonly held by parents holding conservative Christian beliefs, and corporal punishment (Bartkowski, 1996; Bartkowski & Wilcox, 2000; Ellison, 1996). In addition, research findings have supported the commonly held belief that conservative Christian parents are more likely to use corporal punishment as a disciplinary tactic when compared to parents with more liberal religious beliefs or no religious affiliation (Ellison, 1996; Bartkowski, 1996).

Conservative Christians have been criticized in the literature for their punitive discipline techniques (Ezzo, 1998; Lowe, 1998), considered by some authorities to be ineffective and harmful to the child's psychological development (Capps, 1992). Capps (1992), extrapolating from research that revealed positive correlations between Protestant parents and the reported use of corporal punishment (Ellison, 1996; Bartkowski, 1995), asserted that traditional Protestant religious ideas marginalize and torment children and can, therefore, be considered a form of abuse (Capps, 1992). In their study investigating the possible link between religious affiliation and the risk of perpetrating physical abuse against children, Dyslin and Thomsen (2005) found no association between these factors. They concluded that although conservative Protestant parents often use corporal punishment as a component of their child discipline strategies, the parenting manuals that they frequently use (Dobson, 1992; Ezzo & Bucknam, 1999) outline spanking guidelines and encourage adherence to strict

limits when administering corporal punishment, thereby diminishing the likelihood of child physical abuse (Dyslin & Thomsen, 2005).

Slade and Wissow (2004) conducted a prospective study to investigate the relationship between spanking very young children and later behavior problems when those children entered school. Researchers utilized data from the 1979-1998 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth Mother-Child Sample. The nationally representative sample of 14- to 21-year-olds was initially screened in their homes, and then all female respondents with children were again interviewed every 2 years. The questionnaire targeted topics such as spanking frequency, infant temperament, and parent-child interactions, as well as other characteristics of family life. Behavior problems in the children were assessed using the Behavior Problems Index. Results indicated that, among the full sample, reported spanking frequency was positively and significantly associated with children who required a parent-teacher meeting due to teacher-identified behavior problems. However, when controlling for race and ethnicity, the findings differed. Reported spanking frequency was significantly and positively related to identified behavior problems in White children, but was only slightly positive and not statistically significant in African American families, and was slightly negative and not statistically significant in Hispanic families. The researchers concluded that spanking frequency before age 2 was a significant predictor of behavior problems later in life among White, non-Hispanic children. The differences in the findings among the African American and Hispanic children may have been due in part to a greater acceptance of spanking within these cultural groups (Slade & Wissow, 2004).

Douglas (2006) echoed this presumption as part of the rationale for her study investigating the effects of culture on an individual's approval of corporal punishment and violence. Utilizing data from the International Dating Violence Study and a final convenience sample of 7,271 undergraduate students from 32 locations around the world, Douglas employed analysis of covariance to data related to individual perceptions of violence approval and violence socialization, which included specific questions measuring approval of using corporal punishment with children and with adolescents. The percentages of those who approved of spanking children ranged from 12% to 85%, suggesting great diversity of opinions across cultural groups. Although a similar range of percentages, 13% to 72%, was noted for the approval of spanking or slapping an adolescent, significantly fewer respondents were supportive of the use of corporal punishment with adolescents (Douglas, 2006).

Rudy and Grusec (2006) continued the investigation of the influence of cultural factors on parenting practices by looking at differences between Individualist and Collectivist groups. The researchers defined Collectivist groups as those whose members emphasize obedience and control in their child discipline practices, as well as interdependence among family members. Such groups include Latin American, East Asian Indian, and Asian cultures. Individualist groups were defined as those emphasizing autonomy, self-reliance, and self-interest in their child-rearing practices. These groups included individuals of primarily European American descent. Measurements assessed maternal warmth, general view of the child, emotions and cognitions related to discipline, level of authoritarianism (characterized by a focus on controlling child behaviors), level of Collectivism, and children's self-esteem of 33

mother-child collectivist pairs and 32 mother-child individualist pairs. Results indicated significantly higher levels of authoritarianism within the Collectivist group compared to the individualist group. The self-esteem levels of collectivist children were not significantly lower than the individualist children even though their mothers supported an authoritarian approach to discipline.

After calculating effect size, researchers discovered no significant differences in negative ways of thinking and feeling about children between the groups. Among individualist mothers, authoritarianism was significantly associated with negative cognitions related to discipline, and a trend for a negative association was discovered between authoritarianism and maternal warmth. However, for mothers in the collectivist group who ascribed to an authoritarian approach to discipline, no associations or trends with measure of emotion or cognition were evident. Researchers concluded that an authoritarian approach to discipline seems to hold differing, culture-laden meanings for both parents and children of collectivist and individualist groups (Rudy & Grusec, 2006).

In two empirical studies, Danso, Hunsberger, and Pratt (1997) investigated the association between religious beliefs and parents' child-rearing goals and practices by sampling large groups of college-students and parents of college age students. Using the Religious Fundamentalism scale, an instrument that measures the degree to which an individual believes in a standard of truth regarding religion and God, which stands in opposition to evil and dissenting beliefs (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992), the researchers focused their investigation on correlations between religious fundamentalism and parenting practices. Consistent within both samples, Danso et al. found significant correlations between reported religious fundamentalism and parental

valuing of obedience and corporal punishment, which were also linked to reported desires for the transmission of religious beliefs to children. Some results indicated that parents who reportedly valued obedience did not place emphasis on child autonomy. The researchers concluded that many individuals who reportedly espouse religious fundamental beliefs have integrated or will most likely integrate them into their parenting practices (Danso et al., 1997).

Although conservative Protestant parents have been found to value obedience and utilize corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure (Bartkowski, 1995; Bartkowski & Ellison, 1995), they also employ positive parenting, warmth, and affection. Conservative Protestant parenting experts convey the importance of balancing control and love with their parenting practices (Dobson, 1992). In effect, conservative Protestant parents have created a new category of parenting that combines traditional strict and controlling qualities with highly responsive parenting qualities, the latter being more often approved of by current social science experts (Wilcox, 1998). Although conservative Protestants have conveyed the importance of warmth and responsiveness as essential to the child's developing self-concept, they also have put equal or greater importance on the child's developing spiritual and theological beliefs (Dobson, 1992; Ezzo & Bucknam, 1999; Wilcox, 1998).

Those who identify themselves with a religious tradition often engage in the rituals and practices of that tradition, which can be easily observed by outsiders. However, religion often plays a more covert and significant role in the lives of individuals by influencing their goals, values, and search for significance in life (Mahoney et al., 2003; Pargament & Mahoney, 2002). This integration can transform formerly religiously

neutral, although important, aspects of life, including time, people, marriage, and parenting, into aspects with greater significance and eternal meaning. This transformation is evidenced in the parenting manuals of Protestant parenting experts, who have asserted that God has entrusted the task of parenting to parents. Therefore, according to the experts, parents have a responsibility to raise and discipline their children in accordance with "God's Word" so that those children will become adults who trust and obey their parents, but, more importantly, God (Dobson, 1992; Ezzo & Bucknam, 1999). Other researchers have described the role of parenting from a Protestant Christian perspective as a higher calling that involves both sacrifices and rewards. Parenting provides individuals with a unique chance to identify more closely with God as they model to their children qualities that God calls for, such as love, patience, forgiveness, and faithfulness (Bartkowski & Ellison, 1995; Mahoney et al., 2003).

A thorough review of the literature related to corporal punishment shows that researchers have highlighted the lack of consensus regarding the definition of corporal punishment and spanking. This lack of consensus has led to methodological flaws, ambiguous results, and confusion related to applying research to real life settings (Paolucci & Violato, 2004). Examples of inconclusive evidence help to provide a justification for continued research directed at investigating how parents with varying religious commitments and values integrate their beliefs into their parenting practices (Mahoney et al., 2001).

Paolucci and Violato (2004) attempted to clarify the ambiguities and flaws within the literature by conducting a meta-analysis of the published research on corporal

punishment, specifically spanking. The authors included only studies that defined corporal punishment or spanking as physically non-injurious, administered to the child's buttocks or extremities, and given with the intent of modifying a behavior (Paolucci & Violato, 2004) Thus, studies that involved violence or abuse were excluded. The researchers then analyzed a total of 70 studies, with a total of 47,750 participants, from the years 1961 to 2000, for possible cognitive, behavioral, and affective effects of spanking on children. They calculated effect sizes using Glass's delta for the dependent variables. The researchers concluded that corporal punishment is used by parents more frequently on children than adolescents. Small effect sizes indicated that the risk of suffering behavioral or emotional problems as a result of being spanked is very small. Additionally, the authors interpreted that an effect size of zero revealed that individuals are not at risk for developing cognitive problems as a result of being spanked. The research also suggested that children do not translate physical aggression from their parents, in the form of spanking, as freedom to use physical aggression with their peers (Paolucci & Violato, 2004).

Although the professional literature concerning corporal punishment has addressed differences between religiously affiliated individuals and those in the secular community, much diversity of beliefs about corporal punishment exists within the Christian community (Bartkowski, 1995, 1996; Ellison, 1996; Lowe, 1998). A common belief among the most conservative of the Christian community, those who hold to a literal interpretation of Scripture, is that corporal punishment is mandated for use with all children. Parents who support this stance believe that disciplining children must involve the use of corporal punishment. Other parents believe the Scriptures support the use of

corporal punishment, but do not mandate it with all children or discipline situations. Some parents encourage an interpretation of the Scriptures as a whole to discover the spirit of the text, instead of viewing specific verses in isolation as a way of endorsing discipline practices. Still, parents within the Christian community argue that corporal punishment and the unconditional love encouraged by Jesus in the Scriptures are mutually exclusive (Lowe, 1998).

Lowe concluded that mental health professionals and child specialists who work within the Christian population must be vigilant not only to provide sound research findings to parents on the topic of corporal punishment, but also to remain sensitive to their often diverse and strongly held values and beliefs. McCreary (1998) responded by challenging professionals to create value-responsive parent training opportunities. He went on to acknowledge the importance of taking values, culture, and attitudes into consideration when attempting to motivate parents. In response to the corporal punishment debate that has often been fueled by passionate opinions but a lack of empirical data, Ezzo (1998) and Lowe (1998) emphasized the need for continued empirical research on the topic, specifically within the conservative Christian community.

*Protestants and the parent-child relationship*. De Roos, Miedema, and Iedema (2001) investigated the God images of young children, building on previous research that demonstrated relationships among adult and adolescents' secure attachments, positive images of God, and high levels of religious commitment (Blaine, Trivedi, & Eshleman, 1998). Working with a random sample of 72 kindergarten students in both public and private schools in the Netherlands, the researchers assessed the children's

attachments to primary and secondary caregivers, self-concept, and concepts of God (De Roos et al., 2001). Warm, nurturing, emotionally close teacher-child relationships were related to higher levels of self-esteem and positive social interactions among the kindergarteners, as well as kindergarteners' perceptions of God as loving and caring. Although similar correlations were hypothesized for mother-child relationships, they were not found. However, these results are of particular interest for the study proposed in this document, due to the fact that within this sample of children, the teachers often played a more significant role in the teaching of religious beliefs than the parents. Therefore, the quality of the relationship a child has with the individual who represents the source of religious teachings has a more powerful influence on the child's developing perspective of God (De Roos et al., 2001).

Through a combination of three studies, Dickie et al. (1997) investigated the impact of the parent-child relationship on children's concepts of God. They used diverse samples that varied according to age, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and level of religiosity. Many of the results were replicated with each study and provided increased reliability. The combined results indicated that although concepts of God are related to adults' self-concepts, children's perceptions of their parents are stronger predictors of children's developing concepts of God. Additionally, researchers discovered that children's perceptions of nurturance and power in both their mothers and fathers were significantly related to their perceptions of God as nurturing and powerful (Dickie et al., 1997). Therefore, the parent-child relationship seems to be a significant factor in the development of enduring perceptions of God.

To shed light on the influence of religion on mother-child relationships, Pearce and Axinn (1998) analyzed longitudinal data collected from the Intergenerational Panel Study of Mothers and Children. White families with a child born in 1961 in the Detroit metropolitan area were selected using systematic probability sampling. Although the sample was less representative of the United States in regard to religious affiliation, because of a large percentage of the sample identifying themselves as Catholic Christians, the researchers determined that the rates of religious behaviors among the sample were consistent with the national population (Pearce & Axinn, 1998).

The longitudinal data included information from seven face-to-face interviews with mothers between the years 1962 and 1985 and two face-to-face interviews with sons and daughters in 1980 and 1985. The researchers found a significant positive correlation between a mother's religious service attendance and her perception of her relationship with her adult child. High levels of religious service attendance were correlated to mothers' perception of meaningful relationships with their children. However, no significant relationship was found between religious service attendance and adult children's perceptions of the mother-child relationship.

Results also indicated that mothers' views of the importance of religion in their lives were significantly correlated with their reports of the quality of their relationship with their children. Additionally, sons and daughters who reported that religion was very important to their mothers also reported high-quality relationships with their mothers. Not only do these findings seem to indicate that high religiosity in mothers correlates with the perception of better quality mother-child relationships, but also the researchers discovered correlations between religiosity in extended family members and positive

influences on mother-child relationships (Pearce & Axinn, 1998). The level of maternal grandmother's religiosity had significant positive influences on mothers' perceptions of her relationships with her children. Mothers who perceived their own mothers as highly religious were more likely to report good-quality relationships with their children (Pearce & Axin, 1998).

*Play Therapy*

Filial therapy, a model of parent education, is based on the principles of child centered play therapy (CCPT) (Landreth & Bratton, 2006). Central to the study of Play therapy, play has long been regarded as an integral component in the healthy development of children (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). Not only do children play as a means of understanding their world and practicing skills they will need as they grow and mature, but children use play to communicate. Axline (1969) first asserted that children's natural and spontaneous language of communication is play. Using this medium of expression, children convey their thoughts and feelings just as adults communicate using their words (Axline, 1964).

As early as 1909 play gained recognition as a useful psychological approach to working with psychologically disturbed children (S. Freud, 1955). In this landmark case, Sigmund Freud treated "Little Hans," a young boy struggling with a phobia, by discussing the case with the child's father and instructing him to respond to the child in certain therapeutic ways. Other psychoanalytic therapists continued to develop play therapy as a means of psychoanalyzing children, which had previously been impossible because of the lack of language development in young children. Anna Freud (1945) augmented traditional psychoanalysis with the addition of toys to her work with young

children. Although she asserted that children could not be analyzed in the traditional sense due to their inability to free associate and analyze the transference situation, she utilized toys, art media, and dreams to develop a therapeutic relationship with her clients and assist in her analysis of them. Melanie Klein (1964) proposed the use of play with children as a substitute for free association, the vehicle for reaching the unconscious, according to psychoanalytic thought. The addition of play to the psychoanalytic relationship allowed Klein and others the means to analyze children under the age of 6.

These early psychoanalytic forerunners in the field of play therapy laid a foundation for the proliferation of play therapy as a treatment modality in various schools of thought. Virginia Axline, a pioneer in the field of child centered play therapy and student of Carl Rogers, translated Rogers's client centered theory (Rogers, 1951) into a unique approach to treating children. Her belief that children have the tendency toward growth and positive behaviors, and the inherent ability to solve their own problems, facilitated her work with children (Axline, 1969). She promoted the idea of using toys in well-stocked playrooms to create a place that allowed children to communicate through their natural medium of expression and to promote a free and permissive environment conducive to a child's full range of emotional expressions (Axline, 1969). Others, including Landreth (2002), B. G. Guerney (1964), and Moustakas and Makowsky (1952) continued in Axline's child centered approach and focused on the therapeutic relationship as a means for creating an accepting, empathic, nonjudgmental, genuine, and permissive environment for children. They described the therapist's role as communicating empathy, genuineness, and unconditional positive

regard through the use of reflections of the child's feelings, thoughts, and behaviors, always maintaining the belief that the child is continually moving toward self-realization (Axline, 1969; B. G. Guerney, 1964; Landreth, 2002).

*Filial Therapy*

Moustakas (Moustakas & Makowsky, 1952) furthered the development of play therapy in his work with individuals and groups of children with a wide range of emotional, behavioral, and medical problems. Through what he termed relationship play therapy, Moustakas proposed integrating parents into the process of play therapy to decrease child client attrition rates and facilitate self-awareness in their parents (Moustakas & Makowsky, 1952). Bernard Guerney (1964), later, joined by his wife, Louise Guerney, developed a treatment modality that involved training parents to respond as therapeutic agents with their children in an effort to meet the needs of a growing population of children with emotional problems and to make efficient use of mental health professionals' time, Guerney named his approach filial therapy and targeted it to parents of children ages 3 to 10 with behavioral or emotional problems (B. G. Guerney, 1964).

Filial therapy was developed from the foundational principles of child centered play therapy (Landreth & Bratton, 2006), which were based upon Rogers's (1951) client centered therapy. Axline (1969) clarified these principles, which were later outlined by Landreth (2002):

1. Children are not miniature adults, and the therapist does not respond to them as if they were.

2. Children are people. They are capable of experiencing deep emotional pain and joy.

3. Children are unique and worthy of respect. The therapist prizes the uniqueness of each child and respects the person the child is.

4. Children are resilient. Children possess a tremendous capacity to overcome obstacles and circumstances in their lives.

5. Children have an inherent tendency toward growth and maturity. They possess an inner intuitive wisdom.

6. Children are capable of positive self-direction. They are capable of dealing with the world in creative ways.

7. Children's natural language is play, and this is the medium of self-expression with which they are most comfortable.

8. Children have a right to remain silent. The therapist respects a child's decision not to talk.

9. Children will take the therapeutic experience to where they need to be. The therapist does not attempt to determine when or how the child should play.

10. Children's growth cannot be speeded up. The therapist is patient with the child's developmental process (p. 54).

Filial therapy is a novel development that more efficiently uses the mental health professional's time by training paraprofessionals, usually parents, to be therapeutic agents for their children (Guerney, 1964). Thus, parents are empowered as they intervene in the lives of their children in positive ways, and therapists impact the lives of children and future generations of adults through their efforts.

Landreth and Bratton (2006) asserted the benefits of this intervention as one that would help parents:

Understand and accept their children

Develop sensitivity to their children's feelings

Learn how to encourage child's self-direction, self-responsibility, and self-reliance

Gain insight into themselves in relation to their children

Change their perception of their children

Learn child-centered play therapy principles and skills. (p. 12)

Additionally, filial therapy helps children communicate their thoughts, feelings, and needs; develop an internal locus of control, self-direction, and self-esteem; as well as see their parent as an ally in the process (Landreth & Bratton, 2006). The overarching objectives of filial therapy include helping children to:

Develop coping strategies

Increase self confidence

Accept themselves

Develop a more positive self-concept

Become more self-directing

Engage in self-determined decision-making

Experience a feeling of self-control

Become more trusting of oneself. (Landreth & Bratton, 2006, p. 12)

Filial therapy does not focus on behavior change as a goal. However, its emphasis on the development and maintenance of a healthy parent-child relationship often results in positive behavior changes (Landreth, 2002).

The effectiveness of filial therapy is directly related to its unique attributes. Due to the existing parent-child bond as part of the nature of the relationship, the parent potentially plays a more emotionally significant role in the child's life than any therapist could (Landreth & Bratton, 2006). Parent and child participate in weekly, nondirective, 30-minute special playtimes in which the parent's attention is completed focused on the

child. Parents videotape this special playtime and bring the tape to their weekly group meeting. Within this didactic, experiential, and process-oriented intervention, parents participate as group members and receive feedback about their progress in a safe, supportive group setting. Less overwhelming than other parent training programs (Landreth & Bratton, 2006), in filial therapy parents are asked to implement new skills for only 30 minutes each week during special playtimes. Although there is no obligation to change completely, parents often begin to generalize their newly acquired skills to their lives outside of special playtimes.

The effectiveness of filial therapy has been documented in numerous empirical studies with a variety of populations, including non-offending parents of sexually abused children (Costas & Landreth, 1999), incarcerated mothers (Harris & Landreth, 1997), parents of children with learning difficulties (Kale & Landreth, 1999), child witnesses of domestic violence (Smith & Landreth, 2003), immigrant Chinese families (Yuen et al., 2002), and single mothers (Bratton & Landreth, 1995). Across population groups, the effectiveness of filial therapy rests in the fact that the modality utilizes play, the child's natural medium of self-expression, as a way to facilitate parent-child interactions and, thus, to promote the parent-child relationship (Landreth, 2002). In addition, the focus on instilling hope in the relationship and disrupting the cycle of misunderstanding, instead of trying to correct the past, empowers parents, who are seen as helpers instead of harmers (Landreth & Bratton, 2006).

Although the impetus behind B. G. Guerney's (1964) development of filial therapy may have been a matter of necessity and convenience, he outlined five major arguments for filial therapy as an efficacious treatment modality: (a) Children's problems

are often a result of parental lack of knowledge and skills that are perpetuated through maladjusted interpersonal relationships and usually are not a result of parental pathology; (b) therapeutic playtimes provide children with a venue for expressing their thoughts and feelings and promote positive and appropriate parent-child interactions that may help to break the cycle of negative interactions; (c) other client-centered therapists who had experienced success in implementing parent-child interactions in play therapy provided a precedent for motivating parents to help their children; (d) when parents join together with the therapist and are given the primary role in the treatment of their child, their motivation and investment in the process may increase; and (e) the parent-child relationship is usually the most significant in the child's life and, therefore, any positive changes in the child will be exemplified and any small or inept effort by the parent will be more therapeutic to the child than any effort by the therapist (B. G. Guerney, 1964; B. G. Guerney, L. Guerney, & Andronico, 1966; L. Guerney, 2000).

Natalie Fuchs (1957) was one of the first parents to use child centered play therapy techniques at home with her child. Through close correspondence with her father, Carl Rogers, Fuchs was instructed in basic child centered play therapy techniques and began having weekly playtimes using specially selected toys, including clay, dolls, and a training toilet, with her young daughter. Over the course of several weeks, Fuchs's daughter played out scenes related to toilet training and was able to express fear and anxiety related to her own difficult toilet training process. Ultimately, she reinitiated toilet training with less anxiety and a greater sense of confidence (Fuchs, 1957).

Filial therapists use a group format to instruct parents in basic child-centered play therapy techniques and inform them of the goals and benefits of filial therapy for both parent and child (B. G. Guerney et al., 1966). When appropriate, therapists also facilitate parents' exploration of feelings and thoughts in an effort to promote parent self-awareness and a sense of connectedness among group members (L. Guerney, 2000). The goals of the filial sessions include facilitating the child's self-direction, the parent's development and expression of empathy to the child, a feeling of unconditional acceptance in the child, and the child's ability to understand and accept responsibility for his or her own actions. As parents pursue these goals, they are always striving to be completely genuine (B. G. Guerney, 1964).

In the Guerneys' filial format, parents were trained to conduct play sessions at home with their children. As parents acquired the necessary skills and gained confidence in the application of their skills in filial sessions, the Guerneys added or lengthened sessions (B. G. Guerney, 1964). The Guerneys' filial training originally lasted approximately one year, but they later discovered that similar success could be achieved using half the time of training (L. Guerney, 2000).

In an effort to investigate the effectiveness of play therapy and filial therapy interventions from over 6 decades of research and practice, Ray et al. (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of published play therapy, filial therapy, and combined play therapy/filial therapy outcome studies. Researchers evaluated the studies by computing Cohen's d for effect size for each of the studies and then evaluating them together using a random effects model and a weighted integration model (Ray et al., 2001). Results indicated that the treatment groups in the combined play therapy/filial therapy outcome studies

performed at .80 standard deviations better than the groups that received no treatment. This level of effect is considered large and, therefore, provides strong evidence of the effectiveness of play therapy and filial therapy as treatments for young children. In addition, researchers isolated the effects of filial therapy alone and found that the treatment groups in these studies performed at 1.06 standard deviations better than the group that received no treatment, which is also considered a large effect (Ray et al., 2001). Although both play therapy and filial therapy were found to be effective interventions for children, the filial studies revealed a stronger effect size. Researchers concluded that parental involvement in the treatment of children, such as filial therapy, was a significant predictor of positive outcomes among all the play therapy studies (Ray et al., 2001).

*Child Parent Relationship Therapy*

As a shortened adaptation of Bernard and Louise Guerney's filial therapy, Landreth developed a 10-week model, child parent relationship therapy (CPRT), in an effort to meet the demands of busy parents and further increase the efficacy of filial therapy (L. Guerney, 2000; Landreth, 2002; Landreth & Bratton, 2006). Landreth and Bratton utilized many components of Guerney's filial therapy, such as emphasizing the parent's role as the therapeutic change agent, teaching parents the basic principles and skills of child-centered play therapy in a supportive group format, and emphasizing at-home weekly playtimes between parent and child. Although Landreth and Bratton employed CPRT as a useful treatment modality for parents of children expressing various problematic behaviors and emotional concerns, they encouraged the use of CPRT with families who were not suffering from emotional or behavioral difficulties, as a

way of enhancing the parent-child relationship by connecting better emotionally and communicating more effectively. Landreth & Bratton created a structured weekly outline for CPRT that could be easily employed by therapists trained in filial therapy (B. G. Guerney, 1964; Landreth & Bratton, 2006). They emphasized teaching parents to communicate to their children: (a) “I’m here”; (b) “I hear you”; (c) “I understand”; (d) and “I care”; through the use of reflective listening (p. 127). They described the use of role-plays, live observations, and taped observations of parents in special playtimes with their children to augment parents’ acquisition of skills (Landreth & Bratton, 2006). With this outline as a guide, Landreth and Bratton simplified the process of training parents by clearly delineating the didactic teaching objectives central to filial therapy, thereby making filial therapy more amenable to, and readily useable by, therapists.

Many studies have been conducted to investigate the effectiveness of CPRT with a variety of populations. Bratton and Landreth (1995) investigated the effectiveness of CPRT with single parents. The researchers utilized a treatment-control group design and assigned 22 and 21 participants to each group, respectively. The participants completed pre- and post-testing instruments including the Porter Parental Acceptance Scale, the Parenting Stress Index, the Filial Problem Checklist, and they were videotaped playing with their children for 20 minutes in a playroom both before and after the treatment was administered. An analysis of covariance was used to test the significance of the difference between the treatment and control groups.

The parents in the treatment group scored significantly lower than the control group on the Measurement of Empathy in Adult-Child Interaction (MEACI), indicating a significant increase in empathy behaviors toward their children. In regard to the Porter

Parental Acceptance Scale (PPAS), the parents in the treatment group scored significantly higher than the parents in the control group, indicating increases in the treatment group's perceived acceptance of their children. Parents in the treatment group also scored significantly lower than the control group on the Parenting Stress Index (PSI) and the Filial Problem Checklist (FPC), indicating significant decreases in reported stress related to parenting and significant reductions in perceived negative behaviors in their children (Bratton & Landreth, 1995).

Costas and Landreth (1999) examined the effects of CPRT with non-offending parents of children who had been sexually abused. The 26 participating parents were divided into treatment and control groups. All participants completed the Child Behavior Checklist-Parent Report Form (CBC-PRF), the PSI, and the PPAS. The children of the participants were administered the Child Anxiety Scale, the Joseph Preschool and Primary Self-Concept Screening Test, and the Draw a Person: Screening Procedure for Emotional Disturbance, and they conducted play sessions with their children both before and after the 10-week filial treatment was administered. Using an analysis of covariance, the researchers tested the significance of differences between the treatment and control group and found that parents in the treatment group scored significantly higher than the control group on the PPAS total score, indicating an increase in acceptance of their children.

Parents in the treatment group also scored significantly lower than parents in the control group on the PSI total score, indicating that they were experiencing less stress related to parenting, and they scored significantly lower than the control group on measures of empathy, as measured by the MEACI, indicating that they behaved in

ways that communicated increased levels of empathy toward their children (Costas & Landreth, 1999).

Kale and Landreth (1999) studied the effectiveness of CPRT with parents of children experiencing learning difficulties. Twenty-two parents were included in this experimental-control group design and divided equally into two groups of 11 participants. All participants completed three pre- and posttesting instruments: the PPAS, the PSI, and the CBC-PRF. The teachers of the children whose parents participated in this study completed the Child Behavior Checklist-Teacher Report Form (CBC-TRF). The researchers tested the significance of differences between the treatment and control group by utilizing an analysis of covariance and found that parents in the treatment group scored significantly higher than the control group on the PPAS, indicating increases in reported parental feelings of acceptance toward children. Analyses also indicated that parents in the treatment group scored significantly lower than parents in the control group on the PSI, indicating significant decreases in reported stress related to parenting. No significant differences were found between treatment and control group scores on the CBC-PRF or the CBC-TRF (Kale & Landreth, 1999).

Tew, Landreth, Joiner, and Solt (2002) published a study in which they investigated the effectiveness of CPRT with parents of chronically ill children. Of the 23 parents who completed participation in this study, 12 had been placed in the treatment group and 11 in the control group. All participants completed the PPAS, the PSI, and the CBD-PRF both before and after the administration of the treatment. In order to determine the significant differences between the treatment and control groups, researchers used an analysis of covariance. Parents who received filial training in the

treatment group scored significantly higher on the PPAS than parents in the control group, indicating increases in reported feelings of acceptance toward children. Parents in the treatment group also scored significantly lower on the PSI and the CBC, indicating significant decreases in reported parental stress and parents' perception of child problems.

*Cultural Modifications to Child Parent Relationship Therapy*

Researchers and practitioners have responded to the growing interest in cultural considerations in counseling and play therapy with advice, research studies, and literature reviews. In an effort to increase the applicability and effectiveness of play therapy interventions with children and families, Glover (2001) emphasized the need for therapists to recognize their cultural practices and beliefs, gain an understanding of other cultures, and work to become aware and accepting of strengths and differences between cultures. This development includes encouraging client openness about their cultures, avoiding cultural stereotypes, and embracing the unique ways that individuals from different cultures cope with difficulties (Glover, 2001).

Yuen et al. (2002) studied the effectiveness of filial therapy with immigrant Chinese families in Canada. Of the 35 parents who volunteered to participate in the study, 18 were randomly selected for the treatment group, and 17 were placed in a control group. Participants were administered the PPAS, the PSI, and the Filial Problem Checklist, and parents were videotaped as they played with their children both before and after the completion of the treatment. Children of the participants were administered the Self-Perception Profile for Children (SPPC) as a pre- and posttest measure. The following modifications were made to CPRT to address cultural

differences of the population: Filial training was conducted in Cantonese; handouts and assessments were translated into Chinese; parents conducted special play sessions with their children in either English, Mandarin, or Cantonese; and children of the participants were provided with both English and Cantonese versions of the SPPC.

The researchers used analysis of covariance to analyze the data and test for significant differences between the treatment and control groups (Yuen et al., 2002). Participants who received filial training scored significantly lower than the control group on the Filial Problem Checklist, indicating decreases in perceived problems in their children. Participants in the experimental group scored significantly higher than the control group participants on the PPAS, indicating a significant increase in perceived acceptance of their children. Parents in the treatment group also scored significantly lower on the Parenting Stress Index, indicating significant decreases in reported parental stress and parents' perception of child problems.

Lee and Landreth (2003) investigated the effectiveness of CPRT with immigrant Korean parents who were living in the United States. Thirty-six parents volunteered to participate in the study. All met the selection criteria and were randomly placed in either the experimental or control group. All participants were administered the PPAS and the PSI. The researchers videotaped them as they played with their children both before and after the completion of the treatment. The researcher assessed empathy within the parent-child relationship of the participants using the MEACI. The researcher implemented the following modifications in this study for the purpose of respecting cultural differences. The researcher communicated in Korean during filial training; all handouts and assessments given to the parents were available in both Korean and

English; and parents conducted special play sessions with their children in either English or Korean. An analysis of covariance was used to analyze the data and test for significant differences between the treatment and control groups.

Participants who received filial training scored significantly lower than the control group on the MEACI total score, indicating positive gains in reported communication of acceptance, ability to allow the child self-direction, and involvement. Participants in the experimental group scored significantly higher than the control group participants on the PPAS, indicating a significant increase in perceived acceptance of their children. Parents in the treatment group also scored significantly lower on the PSI, indicating significant decreases in reported parental stress.

Sweeney and Skurja (2001) addressed cross-cultural considerations in filial therapy interventions. Although most researchers of filial therapy have utilized population groups from the United States, a growing number using participants from various countries and cultures have found significant positive results as well (Ray et al., 2001). The researchers asserted that because filial therapy is based upon the enhancement of the parent-child relationship, and all people share a need for healthy relationships, filial therapy should be applicable and effective across cultures (Sweeney & Skurja, 2001).

In an effort to increase feelings of acceptance, comfort, and security in children who participate in play therapy, Landreth (2002) recommended the use of culturally appropriate toys with children of culturally different backgrounds. Kao and Landreth (2000) emphasized the importance of cultural sensitivity with their suggestions regarding modifications to traditional play therapy procedures. For example, instead of

emphasizing the child's feelings during the limit-setting process, which could lead to feelings of shame within Chinese children, they encouraged the therapist to focus on his or her own feelings (Kao & Landreth, 2000). Because of the similarities between play therapy and CPRT, culturally responsive adjustments within the CPRT setting could be expected to yield similar benefits.

In an effort to discover possible benefits of the use of filial therapy in mainland China, Guo (2005) conducted a review of the literature related to cross-cultural applications of filial therapy. Through an investigation of filial therapy studies involving Native Americans, Chinese immigrants, and Koreans, the researcher concluded that filial therapy seems to be a culturally sensitive therapeutic approach. However, Guo stressed the importance of additional research, specifically of the qualitative nature, to discover participants' cultural values and reactions to the filial therapy philosophy and format.

Solis, Meyers, and Varjas (2004) designed a qualitative case study to investigate perceptions related to the cultural acceptability of filial therapy with an African American mother. Findings included the participant's report of increases in personal awareness, empathy, and reflections on her parenting skills. Additionally, the participant reported difficulty accepting some of the foundational philosophies of filial therapy, including importance of creating a permissive, unconditionally accepting, and nondirective atmosphere during her playtimes with her child. The participant speculated that this difficulty may have been due to how she was raised. The researchers concluded that discrepancies between the participant's culturally-influenced values and filial therapy

philosophies may have been related to the lack of participant-reported increases in acceptance of her child and decreases in parenting stress (Solis et al., 2004).

Sweeney et al. (2000) advocated the use of filial therapy with Christian parents. They asserted that biblically-based discipline begins with a strong parent-child relationship. Without the relationship, discipline can be equated with behavioral control and punishment. As parents build a strong foundational relationship through the use of filial therapy, their discipline tactics will fall more in line with their biblical beliefs (Sweeney et al., 2000). To date, this researcher found no reported filial therapy studies regarding its applicability with conservative Protestant parents.

*Summary of Literature*

Religion is an integral component of life for many Americans. Therefore, some researchers have emphasized the need for an integration of religious and spiritual components with mental health services (Marks, 2004). Multicultural experts have identified conservative Protestants as a unique cultural variation within the American culture (Baumrind, 1997; Doherty et al., 1998). But in order to provide high-quality mental health services to religiously different individuals, cultural responsiveness on the part of mental health professionals is essential. Westwood and Ishiyama (1990) promoted educating counselors through the use of didactic education, research, and involvement with culturally diverse clients to encourage an understanding of cultural differences.

A large body of Protestant parenting literature is currently available in bookstores and libraries in the United States. These books provide biblically-based instructions for how to parent children and teenagers. However, a lack of quality and thorough

empirical research on the parenting practices of conservative Protestants has resulted in more questions than answers. Whether conservative Protestant parents are adhering to the parenting directives proposed by the authors of Protestant parenting literature is uncertain. Their acceptance of biblically-based versus non-biblically-based parenting resources is currently unknown.

Child parent relationship therapy (CPRT) is a relationship-focused parenting curriculum based on the philosophies of child centered play therapy (Axline, 1969; Landreth & Bratton, 2006). Because the philosophy of CPRT and the cultural beliefs of Protestant parents have not previously been compared, the usefulness of CPRT with conservative Protestants is uncertain. The effectiveness of CPRT has been documented with a variety of populations, but no studies have been conducted to investigate the effectiveness of this approach with conservative Protestant parents.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to conduct a survey to identify the beliefs and practices of conservative Protestant parents, which assisted the researcher in clarifying the assertions in the current literature regarding conservative Protestant parenting. Additionally, this researcher sought to determine the applicability of child parent relationship therapy for conservative Protestant parents by ascertaining the need for cultural modifications.

# CHAPTER 2

# METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The focus of this chapter is on specific procedures and methods used to obtain data from experts in the field of Protestant parenting, data related to the underlying principles of child parent relationship therapy, and responses from conservative Protestant parents, identified through their association with Southern Baptist churches in the Southern Baptist Convention. This researcher presents specific procedures used for developing and administering the Protestant Parenting Inventory, in addition to statistical analyses.

## Research Questions

The following research questions are posed in an effort to identify the core concepts of this study.

1. What are the basic beliefs of conservative Protestant parents regarding children?

2. What are basic parenting practices of conservative Protestant parents?

3. What consistencies or inconsistencies does child parent relationship therapy have with conservative Protestant parents' beliefs and practices regarding parenting?

## Definitions of Terms

*Play therapy* is defined as "a dynamic interpersonal relationship between a child (or a person of any age) and a therapist trained in play therapy procedures who provides selected play materials and facilitates the development of a safe relationship for the child (or person of any age) to fully express and explore self (feelings, thoughts, experiences, and behaviors) through play; the child's natural medium of communication" (Landreth, 2002, p.16).

*Filial therapy* is a therapeutic training modality utilized by therapists trained in play therapy to educate and train parents to work with their children in a therapeutic and developmentally appropriate manner. Therapists provide a combination of demonstrations, experiential learning, and didactic instruction in the basic skills and principles of child-centered play therapy, including reflective listening, therapeutic limit setting, self-esteem building, and encouraging responses. Parents practice these skills and also learn how they can be used to create a nonjudgmental and accepting environment. They are then asked to use their new skills in weekly special play sessions with their children. As parents experience the unique environment facilitated by the acquisition of their newly acquired skills, they promote growth in the parent-child relationship and positive changes for parent and child (Landreth & Bratton, 2006).

*Child parent relationship therapy* is defined as a unique filial therapy approach developed by Landreth and Bratton (2006) that utilizes a 10-week group format for filial therapy instruction. Parents learn the basic skills and principles of child centered play therapy, including reflective listening, therapeutic limit setting, self-esteem building, and encouraging responses. Parents practice these skills and also discover how they can

be used to create a nonjudgmental and accepting environment. Parents acquire a kit of specially selected toys and participate in weekly, 30-minute special play sessions at home with one of their children. As parents experience the unique environment facilitated by the acquisition of their newly acquired skills, they promote growth in the parent-child relationship and positive changes for parent and child (Landreth & Bratton, 2006).

*Conservative Protestant parents* are defined as men and women who are members of a Southern Baptist church in the Southern Baptist Convention and who have parented or are parenting at least one child.

*Protestant parenting experts* are defined as individuals who are published authors in the field of psychology, child development, theology, and other related fields who use a conservative Protestant perspective as the foundation for their parenting assertions.

*Protestant parenting manuals* are defined as the published books of Protestant parenting experts that reflect a conservative Protestant perspective.

*Mainstream parenting experts* is a term used to define individuals who are published authors in the fields of sociology, psychology, child development, and other related fields who base their perspectives of child-rearing and discipline on theories of child development, sociology, and psychology**.**

## Instrument Development

The researcher set out to ascertain beliefs and practices of conservative Protestant parents relative to child parent relationship therapy. In order to develop a viable instrument (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003), the researcher, working in conjunction with

her faculty advisor, followed the appropriate steps that led to the development of the Protestant Parenting Inventory (PPI). A variety of messages are being conveyed to Protestant parents through popular Protestant parenting literature regarding appropriate ways to parent children; and in addition, information distributed through professional research journals in the fields of family studies, child development, and psychology provide information regarding what Protestant parents actually believe about parenting and what they are doing in their roles as parents. Therefore, this researcher conducted a thorough investigation of professional journal articles, published within the last 15 years, related to the topics of religion, parenting, Protestantism, and discipline. Additionally, this researcher studied relevant Protestant parenting manuals, identified in the literature as most popular, best-selling, and those having the greatest impact over time, based upon sales records. The information was used to obtain common opinions of parenting among conservative Protestant parents and conservative Protestant parenting experts.

This researcher obtained conceptual guidelines regarding play therapy and filial therapy by thoroughly reviewing *Play Therapy: The Art of the Relationship* (Landreth, 2002) and *Child Parent Relationship Therapy: A 10-Session Filial Therapy Model* (Landreth & Bratton, 2006). This process served to help the researcher identify possible conservative Protestant parenting beliefs and practices, clarify the underlying principles of child parent relationship therapy, and use this information to develop items for the PPI. The items were created in an effort to help identify possible commonalities and discrepancies between the beliefs and practices of this group and the philosophies of child parent relationship therapy.

*Selection of Protestant Parenting Experts and Protestant Parenting Manuals*

This researcher developed items for the PPI based on information in Protestant parenting manuals, which represent frequently communicated conservative Protestant parenting directives. She conducted an exhaustive review of the literature related to conservative Protestant parenting in an effort to identify commonly accepted experts in the field of Protestant parenting and their manuals on parenting. Boggs (1977) reviewed 32 popular Protestant parenting manuals, which she identified through an extensive search of six Christian bookstores in the Baltimore area. Boggs chose the books she deemed significant based upon popularity, which she identified as those present in two or more of the bookstores she investigated (Boggs, 1983). In a similar review of Christian parenting literature, Bartkowski (1995) identified books for review by narrowing his search to best-selling or widely acclaimed books and those that contained a thorough and systematic explanation of discipline procedures.

Bartkowski and Ellison (1995), in their review of Christian parenting literature, asserted that parenting practices can change over time and are often influenced by trends in the parenting literature. However, other researchers pointed to an author's longevity, number of publications sold, and overall success in the field of Protestant parenting as important factors to consider. These factors speak to the author's popularity and ability to adapt to changing trends and continue to effectively communicate his or her parenting principles (Bartkowski & Ellison, 1995).

Wilcox (1998) identified James Dobson, founder of Focus on the Family, as one of the most popular and prolific conservative Protestant parenting and family experts in

the United States. Through radio shows and countless books, he distributes his beliefs and advice regarding parenting and family issues (Wilcox, 1998).

This researcher contacted a Children's Minister at a large Baptist church in the Dallas/Forth Worth area and obtained a list of parenting books he commonly recommends to parents who are seeking parenting advice from a biblical perspective. The experts and their publications, commonly identified by two or more of the preceding researchers and minister based upon their popularity, endurance over time, prolific nature, and systematic philosophies, were identified by this researcher and include the following:

1. Larry Christianson (1970) - *The Christian Family*
2. James Dobson (1992) - *Dare to Discipline* or *The New Dare to Discipline*
3. James Dobson (1978) - *The Strong-willed Child*
4. Garry Ezzo and Robert Bucknam (1999) - *Childwise*
5. Tedd Tripp (1995) - *Shepherding a Child's Heart*

According to Boggs (1983), authors of Protestant parenting manuals proposed the view that children should be parented with the goal of facilitating them toward love and service to God, responsibility, respect for authority, self-discipline, obedience, and a concern for others. Upon review of the literature, which included James Dobson's *Dare to Discipline* and *Hide or Seek*, and Larry Christianson's *The Christian Family*, Boggs concluded that Protestant parents are expected to closely monitor their children, set limits to behavior, and consistently enforce limits through the use of preventative methods, positive reinforcement, and spanking, when other forms of discipline have been exhausted.

The Bible is used as the foundational basis of truth for the directives put forth in Protestant parenting manuals (Bartkowski, 1996; Boggs, 1983, Dobson, 1992; Ezzo & Bucknam, 1999). However, even as far back as the 1960s popular Protestant parenting experts integrated psychological principles and behavioral science into their literature (Boggs, 1983). They promoted practices consistent with mainstream psychology and child development, such as refraining from verbal threats, intimidation, and physical violence; modeling positive behaviors for children; and respecting the inherent worth of all human beings (Bartkowski & Wilcox, 2000).

Bartkowski and Ellison (1995) proposed the idea that there are four main subject areas of parenting that highlight the divergence in beliefs between Protestant parenting experts and mainstream parenting experts: long-term parenting goals, the parent-child relationship, how parenting roles are defined, and discipline practices (Bartkowski & Ellison, 1995). Bartkowski (1995) stated that Protestant ideas regarding parenting, specifically disciplining children, seem to be related to several beliefs including (a) the inerrancy of Scripture, (b) the total depravity of humans, and (c) the belief that sin must be punished with physical pain.

*Identification of Filial Therapy Philosophies*.

This researcher also developed items for the PPI based upon Axline's (1969) beliefs about children, which exemplify the basic principles and philosophies of child centered play therapy. These are also consistent with the beliefs in filial therapy, first developed by Bernard and Louise Guerney (B. G. Guerney, 1964; L. Guerney, 2000), and specifically indicative of the teachings put forth in child parent relationship therapy (Landreth & Bratton, 2006). Therefore, this researcher thoroughly investigated the

writings of Virginia Axline, Bernard and Louise Guerney, Garry Landreth, and Sue Bratton in order to develop items on the PPI related to the principles of filial therapy.

Landreth (2002) outlined the basic philosophy of child centered play therapy (Axline, 1969), which serves as the underlying principle of filial therapy (Landreth, 2002):

> Children are not miniature adults, and the therapist does not respond to them as if they were.
>
> Children are people. They are capable of experiencing deep emotional pain and joy.
>
> Children are unique and worthy of respect. The therapist prizes the uniqueness of each child and respects the person the child is.
>
> Children are resilient. Children possess a tremendous capacity to overcome obstacles and circumstances in their lives.
>
> Children have an inherent tendency toward growth and maturity. They possess an inner intuitive wisdom.
>
> Children are capable of positive self-direction. They are capable of dealing with the world in creative ways.
>
> Children's natural language is play, and this is the medium of self-expression with which they are most comfortable.
>
> Children have a right to remain silent. The therapist respects a child's decision not to talk.
>
> Children will take the therapeutic experience to where they need to be. The therapist does not attempt to determine when or how the child should play.
>
> Children's growth cannot be speeded up. The therapist is patient with the child's developmental process. (p. 54)

Using these principles, B. G. Guerney (1964) developed filial therapy with the goal of helping children communicate their thoughts, feelings, and needs; develop an internal locus of control, self-direction, and self-esteem; and see their parents as allies

in the process. Landreth and Bratton (2006) asserted the benefits of this intervention as one that would help parents understand and accept their children; develop sensitivity to their children's feelings; learn how to encourage their children's self-direction, self-responsibility, and self-reliance; gain insight into themselves in relation to their children; and change their perceptions of their children (p.12).

This researcher, along with a faculty advisor trained extensively in filial and play therapy, investigated the identified Protestant parenting manuals and the preceding researchers' reactions to them and integrated this information to create items on the PPI. The items were constructed in an effort to identify parenting beliefs and practices of Protestant parents and to highlight similarities and differences with the principles and philosophy of child parent relationship therapy (CPRT).

*Development of Items*

The researcher, formally trained in both child centered play therapy and filial therapy, along with a faculty advisor also trained in child centered play therapy and filial therapy, identified statements in Axline's (1969) tenets and beliefs about children that were similar in subject matter or theme to statements made by authors in Protestant parenting manuals or researchers in professional research related to Protestant parenting. These statements were developed into seven items. Three additional items were developed based on the traditional group format for administration of CPRT:

1. Children have an inherent tendency to grow and develop in positive ways.
2. Children possess an inner wisdom about good and bad.
3. Part of my role as a parent is to allow my child to develop his or her own religious beliefs.

4. Play is the way young children naturally communicate their thoughts and feelings.

5. It is an important part of my role as a parent to offer my children the opportunity to make choices for themselves.

6. As a parent, I strive to promote independence in my children.

7. It is an important part of my role as a parent to offer my children the opportunity to make choices for themselves.

8. I believe that only someone with religious beliefs similar to my own would be able to fully understand my perspective as a parent.

9. I have a difficult time feeling like I can really connect with parents who have different religious beliefs from my own.

10. When I encounter parenting difficulties, I seek out a variety of parenting resources, both nonreligious and biblically-based.

Directions requested that participants respond to the preceding items using a 5-point Likert scale: 1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 2 = *Mostly Disagree*, 3 = *Not Sure*, 4 = *Mostly Agree*, 5 = *Strongly Agree*, as indicated by Fink and Kosecoff (1998). The items were then placed into categories based upon commonalities: Nature of the Parent-Child Relationship (items 1-4), Child's Autonomy versus. Obedience (items 5-7), and Willingness to Utilize Resources Outside the Church (items 8-10). The researcher then gathered a focus group of four individuals, all of whom were parents and professionals in the field of counseling, two who professed conservative religious beliefs, and two who professed liberal religious or atheistic beliefs. The researcher collected their comments and made changes to the instrument in the way of phrasing and clarification of items. In order to increase reliability of the instrument, the researcher developed antithesis items for the 10 original items and added 4 additional items, resulting in 24 total items (see Appendix B).

As suggested by Fink and Kosecoff (1998), the researcher administered the PPI to a pilot group of 14 individuals who were all members of a conservative, evangelical, Protestant church. The characteristics of the pilot group were similar to the population identified by this researcher for this study. Cronbach's alpha was run on the data, and reliability was estimated to be .244, much lower than what is normally considered acceptable for educational research purposes (Wu & Watkins, 2006). In response to the statistical results, the researcher developed additional items and grouped them into five categories (or factors), based upon the topics of the items. The five factors included: Nature of humans/children-4 items; Autonomy vs. Obedience-12 items; Religious/Spiritual Development-6 items; Willingness to Utilize Resources Outside the Church-8 items; and Authoritative vs. Authoritarian Parenting Style-12 items; for a total of 42 items. Items identified as negatively phrased were recoded.

The researcher identified a focus group of six individuals, all of whom were parents and associated themselves with a conservative, evangelical, Protestant church tradition. The group completed the instrument (though they did not return it to the researcher for confidentiality purposes) and then discussed items they found confusing, or unclear. The researcher also asked them to describe any important aspect of their parenting approach that they felt was not touched on in the instrument. The researcher took notes and made changes in the way of clarification of items. Forty-two items were included in the second pilot, and the researcher administered it to 44 individuals, all of whom were affiliated with a conservative, evangelical, Protestant church (see Appendix B).

The researcher coded the data, entered it into SPSS, and recoded all negatively phrased items. The researcher used Cronbach's coefficient alpha to estimate the reliability of the new data at .923. The set of data was submitted to principal component analysis using Promax with Kaiser Normalization as the rotation method. Thirteen factors were suggested with this method (13 factors had eigenvalues less than 1). As the criterion of eigenvalue 1 is not generally reliable (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006), a parallel analysis was performed 10 times to obtain stable average eigenvalues for each factor. The researcher made comparisons of eigenvalues between the Promax with the Kaiser normalization rotation method and the average parallel analysis. Eight factors on the Promax method had larger eigenvalues than the eigenvalues from the random parallel analysis, so eight factors were used. The researcher identified some weak loadings and cross loadings among the items, based upon the rotated component matrix chart. The researcher identified items that did not meet the $\geq |.45|$ threshold or cross-loaded on factors (Hair et al, 2006). The researcher either rephrased the items to increase the likelihood of loading on another factor or deleted the item from the instrument. Six items were deleted and 4 were rephrased, resulting in a remainder of 36 items. The researcher also included 10 demographic items in the final revision of the instrument, which included questions related to gender, age, education level, ethnicity, location of residence (urban, suburban, or rural), household income range, frequency of church attendance, denomination affiliation, age of children in the household, number of children, and religious beliefs (conservative, moderate, or liberal).

## Identification of Population

The theological beliefs of Protestants vary dramatically across denominations and therefore pose a problem to researchers attempting to clarify correlations between Protestant beliefs and other life choices and factors (Sherkat, 2000). Researchers have promoted the idea of focusing on specific Protestant groups when conducting research in order to decrease generalizations of a group that tends to be heterogeneous (Bartkowski, 1995; Wilcox, 2002). Grouping Protestants into categories such as conservative (defined as those adhering to the inerrancy of the Bible) and nonconservative has allowed researchers to identify significant differences between the two groups (Bartkowski & Wilcox, 2000). Researchers seeking to uncover differences between Protestant groups have repeatedly identified the Southern Baptist denomination as a conservative Protestant denomination (Bartkowski & Wilcox, 2000; Wilcox, 2002). Because researchers have identified individuals who affiliate with the Southern Baptist denomination as some of the most religiously conservative, or fundamentalist Protestants (Bartkowski & Xu, 2000), and the predominant denomination identified by Americans who report an affiliation with the Protestant denomination is a Baptist denomination (Kosmin et al., 2001), the researcher focused this study on obtaining data from individuals who attend Southern Baptist churches.

Using convenience sampling, the researcher selected four Southern Baptist churches in the DFW area for this study, based upon geographic location. Three of the churches are within a 10-mile radius of each other and serve individuals from similar socioeconomic groups. One of the four churches is located in a small rural town approximately 20 miles south of the DFW Metroplex. Membership in these four

churches ranged from approximately 100 to 7,000. This researcher first obtained permission to collect data for this study from a church leader at each of the 4 churches. These church leaders were in paid staff positions at their respective churches with responsibilities for one or more Bible study classes. The researcher then recruited participants for this study through Bible study classes at the four churches.

Based upon generally accepted standards for sample size in educational research using a correlational design ($n \geq 30$), and the accepted practice of increasing sample size in order to decrease the standard error and a more powerful test of the null hypotheses, the sample in the current study ($n=148$) is considered more than sufficient (Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 1998). In addition, the sample size exceeded the generally accepted practice of at least 15 participants per variable when a multiple regression analysis is conducted.

The researcher obtained the participants' demographic information, separated the information from the informed consent form in order to ensure confidentiality, and coded the information for data entry. Results can be viewed in Table 1. Of the 148 participants, the majority of them were female (65.1%). A vast majority (92.6%) identified their ethnicity as White (non-Hispanic); 4.7% reported Hispanic; 1 (.7%) participant identified Asian; 1 (.7%) identified biracial/multiracial; and the remaining 2 participants (1.3%) chose "Other". All of the participants graduated from high school; 26.8% completed some college coursework; 8.7% had earned their associate's degree; 36.9% reported completing a bachelor's degree; and 16.8% had completed an advanced degree. Participant ages ranged from 20 to 69 years, with the

Table 1
*Participant Demographics*

| Variable | | N | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | | | |
| | 1=Male | 52 | 34.9 |
| | 2=Female | 97 | 65.1 |
| Age | | | |
| | 1=18-19 | 0 | 0 |
| | 2=20-29 | 11 | 7.4 |
| | 3=30-39 | 81 | 54.4 |
| | 4=40-49 | 31 | 20.8 |
| | 5=50-59 | 16 | 10.7 |
| | 6=60-69 | 10 | 6.7 |
| | 7=70+ | 0 | 0 |
| Education Level | | | |
| | 1=Some High School | 0 | 0 |
| | 2=High School graduate | 16 | 10.7 |
| | 3=Some College | 40 | 26.8 |
| | 4=Associate's degree | 13 | 8.7 |
| | 5=Bachelor's degree | 55 | 36.9 |
| | 6=Advanced degree | 25 | 16.8 |
| Ethnicity | | | |
| | 1=Hispanic | 7 | 4.7 |
| | 2=African American | 0 | 0 |
| | 3=White (non-Hispanic) | 138 | 92.6 |
| | 4=Asian | 1 | 0.7 |
| | 5=Bi-racial/Multiracial | 1 | 0.7 |
| | 6=Other | 2 | 1.3 |
| Location of Residence | | | |
| | 1=Urban | 9 | 6 |
| | 2=Suburban | 123 | 82.6 |
| | 3=Rural | 17 | 11.4 |
| Total household income range last year | | | |
| | 1=Less than $30,000 | 4 | 2.7 |
| | 2=$30,001 - $50,000 | 19 | 12.8 |
| | 3=$50,001 - $80,000 | 39 | 26.2 |
| | 4=$80,001 + | 87 | 58.4 |

*table continues*

| Variable | | N | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Church Attendance | | | |
| | 1=Never/rarely | 0 | 0 |
| | 2=Several times a year | 8 | 5.4 |
| | 3=Monthly | 4 | 2.7 |
| | 4=Weekly | 65 | 43.6 |
| | 5=More than once a week | 72 | 48.3 |
| Denomination | | | |
| | 1=Baptist | 134 | 89.9 |
| | 2=Catholic | 1 | 0.7 |
| | 3=Church of Christ | 0 | 0 |
| | 4=Lutheran | 1 | 0.7 |
| | 5=Methodist | 0 | 0 |
| | 6=Non-denominational | 12 | 8.1 |
| | 7=Presbyterian | 0 | 0 |
| | 8=Other | 1 | 0.7 |
| Religious Beliefs | | | |
| | 1=Conservative | 103 | 69.1 |
| | 2=Moderate | 46 | 30.9 |
| | 3=Liberal | 0 | 0 |
| Church Location | | | |
| | 1=A | 53 | 34.9 |
| | 2=B | 45 | 30.2 |
| | 3=C | 31 | 20.8 |
| | 4=D | 21 | 14.1 |

majority of individuals (54.4%) falling between the ages of 30 and 39. Just over 7% of individuals reportedly were between the ages of 20 and 29. More than 20% of participants reported their age as between 40 and 49 years. Sixteen of the participants reported their age in the range of 50 to 59 years, making up 10.7% of the total, and almost 7% reported their ages in the 60 to 69 year range. The majority of participants (82.6%) reported living in a suburban area, 6% in an urban area, and 11.4% in a rural area.

The majority of participants (58.4%) reported a household income range of $80,000 or more per year. Almost 3% of participants reported their income as less than $30,000 per year. Nearly 13% reported their income in the $30,001 to $50,000 range, and

26.2% reported their income in the $50,001 to $80,000 range. According to participant responses 5.4% participate in church-related activities at least several times per year, 2.7% participate monthly, 43.6% on a weekly basis, and 48.3% participate in multiple church activities each week. Although all participants were in attendance at a Southern Baptist church during the collection of this data, 89.9% reported Baptist as the denomination that best described them. Just over 8% reportedly identified themselves as nondenominational, and of the remaining 2 participants, 1 identified Catholic (.7%) and the other identified Other (.7), without an explanation, as the denominations that best described them.

Participants were also prompted to describe their personal religious beliefs within their denomination, as suggested by Bartkowski and Wilcox (2000). The majority (69.1%) indicated that "Conservative" best-described their beliefs, whereas 30.9% reported that "Moderate" was the best descriptor of their religious beliefs. "Liberal" was presented as an option, but no participants indicated this option.

Demographic information obtained through this study was compared to demographic information obtained through a survey of Southern Baptist congregations, referred to as Southern Baptist Congregations Today, throughout the United States. Researchers obtained a representative sample by collecting data from Southern Baptists in over 14,000 congregations nationwide (Jones, 2001). Consistent with the research collected in the present study, the national survey of Southern Baptists found that the majority of respondents were high school graduates, 92.1% were Caucasian, 2.7% were Hispanic, and 3% were Asian; and 90% of congregations were described as theologically conservative, whereas the remaining 10% were described as theologically

moderate (Jones, 2001). Although 65.1% of the participants in the current study identified themselves as female, only 52% in the Southern Baptist Congregations Today survey identified themselves as female. This may be due in part to the fact that this researcher collected data from individuals in Bible study groups at Church Location 3, all of which were female-only groups. Whereas only one church in the current study was located in a rural area, more than one third of the churches participating in the Southern Baptist Congregations Today survey were located in rural areas (Jones, 2001). Despite the slight overrepresentation of females, it appears that the participants of the current study are representative of the typical Southern Baptist population.

## Procedures

The researcher conducted this study using the aforementioned PPI, developed by the researcher and her faculty advisor. The instrument included 36 items related to parenting beliefs and practices, as well as 10 demographic items. Four different sites were identified for data collection. These sites were all Southern Baptist Churches in the North Texas area. Three were located in large cities within the DFW Metroplex, and one was located in a rural area approximately 20 miles south of the DFW Metroplex. Before proceeding with the collection of data, the researcher obtained approval to conduct this research study from the University of North Texas Institutional Review Board. The researcher made copies of the 46-item instrument (10 demographic items and 36 items related to parenting beliefs and practices), as well as the university-approved informed consent form and prepared them for distribution. This researcher contacted four church leaders, one at each of the participating churches, and explained the research study using the telephone script (see Appendix A). Together, the

researcher and church leaders scheduled appointment times for presentation of the study to parents at the four churches. During the months of December 2006 and January 2007, the researcher visited Bible study groups and invited parents in the groups to participate in the research study. The researcher briefly explained the purpose of the study and the informed consent procedures using the Recruitment of Participants script (see Appendix A). The researcher administered and collected 45 instruments from Site 1; 31 instruments from Site 2; 21 instruments from Site 3; and 21 instruments from Site 4. The researcher collected the completed instruments and informed consent forms, signed the informed consent forms, coded the instruments and informed consent forms, separated the instruments from the informed consent forms, and filed them separately. The researcher then entered the data into an SPSS file.

## Data Analysis

Correlational research is the branch of statistics used to obtain information regarding the relationship between two variables. Although results of correlational studies cannot imply causality between variables, the information obtained by statistically analyzing data and calculating a correlation coefficient can provide useful information regarding the degree to which two variables are related. A correlation coefficient indicates the strength (between -1.00 and +1.00) and direction (positive or negative) between two variables (Hair et al., 2006). In this study, the researcher chose to use the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) due to its frequent use in behavioral science research and its precise estimate of correlation among variables (Hinkle et al., 1998). In order to utilize Pearson's r, the information to be analyzed must be expressed as continuous data. Because all demographic data collected in this

research study were categorical, recoding was necessary to use the data. In the present study, Pearson's r was used to determine the correlation between participant demographic information and their responses to items on the PPI.

*Multiple Regression*

Criterion coding is one way of transforming categorical data into data that can be used in various multivariate analyses (Hair et al., 2006). The researcher calculated descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and frequencies for demographic information, participant responses on the PPI, and factors derived from exploratory factor analysis. Means of the participant responses to each of the predictor variables (e.g., gender, age) were replaced by the individual responses so that the means designated group membership. Instead of using dummy coding variables, criterion coding allows a single vector to represent all the options for an individual demographic variable (Schumacker & Williams, 1993). Additionally, all the criterion coded vectors can be collectively viewed as the predictor variable (or independent variable) in multiple regression analyses (Henson & Hwang, 2002).

After analyzing the distribution of responses, the researcher recoded the demographic data in this study in order to obtain a balanced distribution of at least 15 responses per response option (Hair et al., 2006). Because of extremely uneven distribution of responses due to lack of diversity on variables ethnicity, location of residence, and denomination, the researcher did not include these variables in the criterion coding of demographic variables for multiple regression analyses. Of the remaining variables, gender, age, education level, total household income range, church attendance, and religious beliefs, the following were recoded in order to create a

more equal distribution of responses with at least 15 participants on each response: age, education level, total household income range, and church attendance.

In addition, using SPSS, the researcher altered demographic data, including information regarding the ages and genders of participants' children, into a more useful format (age of oldest child). This researcher also included coded data for the site in which the data were collected, so that any possible correlations between participant responses and church location could be investigated. A total of eight demographic variables (gender, age, education level, age of oldest child, total household income range, church attendance, religious beliefs, and site) remained and can be viewed in Table 2. The new groupings resulted in 61.7 % of participants between the ages of 20 and 39 and 38.3% between the ages of 40 and 69; 46.3% of participants having at least a high school diploma, but no more than an associate's degree, and 53.7% having at least a 4-year college degree; 34.9% of participants with the oldest under the age of 6; 40.9% with the oldest child between the ages of 6 and 18; and 24.2% with the oldest child of least 19 years of age. Regroupings also changed total household income range groupings so that 15.4% of the participants fell into the 0-$50,000 per year range, 26.2% in the $50,001-$80,000 range, and 58.4% in the $80,001+ range. Just over 50% of the participants fell into the category of attending church once a week or less, with 48.3% attending multiple times a week.

The researcher did not regroup the demographic categories of gender, religious beliefs, and site (church location). The variables were then criterion coded for use in multiple regression analyses. According to commonly accepted practices when using criterion coding for multiple regression analyses, there must be at least 15 participants

Table 2
*Demographics With Combined and Recoded Data*

| Variable | N | % |
|---|---|---|
| Gender | | |
| 1=Male | 52 | 34.9 |
| 2=Female | 97 | 65.1 |
| Age | | |
| 1=20-39 | 92 | 61.7 |
| 2=40-69 | 57 | 38.3 |
| Education level | | |
| 1=HS grad, but no more than Assoc. degree | 69 | 46.3 |
| 2=College degree or more | 80 | 53.7 |
| Age of oldest child | | |
| 1=0 to 5 years | 52 | 34.9 |
| 2=6 to 18 years | 61 | 40.9 |
| 3=19 or more years | 36 | 24.2 |
| Total household income range last year | | |
| 1=Up to $50,000 | 23 | 15.4 |
| 2=$50,001 - $80,000 | 39 | 26.2 |
| 3=$80,001 + | 87 | 58.4 |
| Church attendance | | |
| 1=Weekly or less | 77 | 51.7 |
| 2=Multiple times a week | 72 | 48.3 |
| Religious beliefs | | |
| 1=Conservative | 103 | 69.1 |
| 2=Moderate | 46 | 30.9 |
| 3=Liberal | 0 | 0 |
| Church location | | |
| 1=A | 53 | 34.9 |
| 2=B | 45 | 30.2 |
| 3=C | 31 | 20.8 |
| 4=D | 21 | 14.1 |

for every variable. Although the sample was not random, the sample size of 148 parents exceeded the minimum sample size requirement for conducting a multiple regression analysis with eight criterion coded variables (Hair et al., 2006).

# CHAPTER 3

# RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Results section of this chapter provides statistical analyses of the data collected for this research study of parenting beliefs and practices and the demographic characteristics of the population sampled. Factor analysis, correlational analysis, descriptive statistics, and multiple regression analyses results are described in the text and displayed in table format.

## Exploratory Factor Analysis

In order to condense the data collected from the PPI into categories for the purpose of confirmation of proposed factors generated in the creation of the PPI, simplification of information, and preparation for subsequent data analyses, the researcher applied exploratory factor analysis to the 148 observations for the 36 items of the instrument, in accordance with steps proposed by Hair et al. (2006). The data were submitted to principal component analysis with an oblique Promax rotation with Kaiser normalization. The researcher conducted this step to find the correlations among the factors and to decide whether a high-order factor analysis was required.

The results of the analysis revealed weak correlations, indicating no need for a high order factor analysis. Next, the researcher conducted exploratory factor analysis using the Varimax rotation, which suggested 13 factors. Similar to the exploratory factor analysis conducted on the data from the second pilot administration of the PPI, a parallel analysis was performed 10 times to achieve a stable average eigenvalue for each factor. Then the comparisons of eigenvalues between the K1 Varimax approach and the average parallel analysis were conducted. The researcher detected eight

eigenvalues from the K1 Varimax approach that were greater than the average values based on random numbers, which suggested eight factors. An eight-factor structure was run and the researcher identified factor loadings from the rotated component matrix table.

Results revealed that Factors 3, 6, 7, and 8 had only one item loading on each of them. It has been recommended in exploratory factor analysis that each of the factors contain at least three items (Hair et al., 2006), therefore, the researcher ran a new exploratory factor analysis for four factors using the Varimax approach with Kaiser normalization. The researcher then examined item loadings with a goal of obtaining the smallest number of possible factors and having all items load on one factor $> |.45|$ and on all other factors $< |.45|$, which is considered a minimum level for interpretation of a factor structure (Hair et al., 2006). The researcher excluded items, one at a time, followed each time by another four-factor exploratory factor analysis to check for item loadings and total percentage variance explained. Items 15, 8, 7, 27, 28, 22, 33, 5, 32, 21, 30, 3, 20, and 1 were excluded due to weak or cross-loadings, which resulted in all remaining items loading on only one factor each, with a total percentage variance explained of 48.8%. After excluding the preceding 14 items, the total items remaining from the original 36 items were 22. The researcher grouped these 22 items based on their factor loadings, and created factor names for each of the four factors.

Table 3 provides a graphical depiction of the four Factors, all 22 items grouped according to their factor loadings, and mean and standard deviation scores for each item. According to exploratory factor analysis, items within each factor were determined to be highly correlated with each other, meaning that each individual participant

Table 3

*Factor Pattern/Structure Matrix and Descriptives for 22 Items From Parenting Beliefs and Practices Inventory Rotated to the Varimax criterion With Kaiser normalization (n=148)*

| Item | M | SD | Influ of Rel Factor 1 | Par Control Factor 2 | Discipline Factor 3 | Openness Factor 4 | h^2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Influence of Religion | | | | | | | |
| 2. Parents should direct their children to follow the parents' religious beliefs. | 4.390 | 0.740 | **0.582** | 0.100 | -0.142 | -0.067 | 0.180 |
| 4. When I experience parenting difficulties with my child, I am likely to seek help from ONLY a Biblically-based resource. | 3.510 | 1.170 | **0.620** | 0.124 | 0.092 | 0.218 | 0.454 |
| 10. I believe that ONLY someone with religious beliefs similar to my own would be able to give me useful parenting advice. | 2.540 | 1.110 | **0.628** | 0.005 | 0.245 | 0.258 | 0.521 |
| 13. Children are born with the tendency to do wrong. | 3.530 | 1.350 | **0.548** | -0.009 | -0.287 | 0.069 | 0.387 |
| *14. When I encounter parenting difficulties, I seek out a variety of parenting resources, both non-religious and Biblically-based.* | 2.470 | 1.170 | **0.510** | 0.014 | 0.189 | 0.379 | 0.440 |
| *19. I am open to gaining parenting knowledge from NON-religious experts in the field of parenting.* | 2.820 | 1.140 | **0.597** | 0.142 | 0.227 | 0.367 | 0.563 |
| 26. I believe it is important for me to teach my children ONLY ONE religioius belief system, and model how they should follow it. | 4.040 | 1.140 | **0.645** | -0.064 | -0.155 | -0.060 | 0.448 |
| *36. Parents should expose their children to various religious belief systems to facilitate the development of their children's personal religious beliefs.* | 3.490 | 1.260 | **0.604** | 0.180 | 0.060 | -0.260 | 0.468 |
| Parental Control | | | | | | | |
| *9. Elementary school-age children have the ability to contribute ideas to help parents develop useful parenting strategies.* | 2.860 | 1.190 | 0.132 | **0.803** | 0.023 | 0.095 | 0.672 |

*table continues*

| Item | M | SD | Influ of Rel Factor 1 | Par Control Factor 2 | Discipline Factor 3 | Openness Factor 4 | h^2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17. Children between the ages of approximately 6 and 10 do NOT have the ability to help parents generate ideas that are useful for effective parenting. | 2.520 | 1.070 | 0.122 | 0.807 | 0.018 | 0.022 | 0.667 |
| *23. Older children and teens can play a useful role in helping their parents develop household rules and other parentign strategies.* | 2.300 | 1.010 | -0.066 | **0.789** | -0.073 | 0.131 | 0.649 |
| 31. Regardless of age, it is Inappropriate for children to collaborate with their parents to generate parenting strategies. | 2.430 | 1.110 | 0.135 | **0.762** | 0.230 | 0.090 | 0.660 |
| Discipline | | | | | | | |
| 11. As a parent, I believe spanking should ALWAYS be utilized as part of discipline with young children. | 2.480 | 1.240 | 0.102 | 0.112 | **0.457** | 0.211 | 0.276 |
| 12. As a parent, I believe spanking is BEST utilized as a disciplinary measure in response to all acts of disobedience by children. | 2.090 | 1.060 | 0.118 | 0.038 | **0.588** | 0.138 | 0.380 |
| 18. As a parent, I believe spanking is a useful disciplinary technique when utilized with older children and teen-agers. | 2.090 | 1.060 | 0.033 | -0.076 | **0.691** | -0.019 | 0.485 |
| 24. As a parent, I believe spanking is EQUALLY USEFUL as a disciplinary technique for both young children AND teen-agers. | 2.030 | 1.030 | -0.065 | -0.043 | **0.766** | -0.021 | 0.593 |
| 34. It is my responsibility as a parent to teach my children religious and spiritual truths. | 4.880 | 0.520 | 0.122 | -0.113 | **-0.530** | 0.053 | 0.311 |
| *35. In order to discipline a child effectively, a parent should include a discussion about why the disciplinary action was necessary.* | 1.370 | 0.660 | -0.054 | 0.020 | **0.486** | -0.105 | 0.251 |

*table continues*

| Item | M | SD | Influ of Rel Factor 1 | Par Control Factor 2 | Discipline Factor 3 | Openness Factor 4 | h^2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6. I have a difficult time feeling like I can REALLY CONNECT with people who have different religious beliefs than mine. | 2.530 | 1.160 | 0.171 | 0.008 | -0.002 | **0.719** | 0.547 |
| *16. I find myself being able to interact comfortably with people who have different religious beliefs than my own.* | 2.080 | 0.970 | -0.043 | 0.170 | -0.166 | **0.670** | 0.507 |
| 25. In social setings, I am usually Uncomfortable interacting with individuals whose religious beliefs differ from my own. | 2.090 | 0.890 | -0.091 | 0.047 | 0.149 | **0.763** | 0.615 |
| *29. I have experienced feeling REALLY CONNECTED with one or more people who have religious beliefs that differ from my own.* | 2.740 | 1.210 | 0.366 | 0.165 | 0.027 | **0.554** | 0.458 |
| Trace | | | 4.194 | 2.501 | 2.212 | 1.830 | |
| % Variance | | | 19.06% | 11.37% | 10.01% | 8.32% | |
| Mean h^2 | | | | | | | 0.479 |
| Total % Variance: 48.80% | | | | | | | |

*Notes*. SD = standard deviation.

M = mean item scores from responses to a 5-point Likert scale: 1=*strongly disagree*, 2=*mostly disagree*, 3=*not sure*, 4=*mostly agree*, & 5=*strongly agree*. The italicized items have recoded scores; they are inverted. Percent variance is post-rotation.

Items are sorted by factors. Factor pattern/structure coefficients greater than I.40I are in bold type. The four factors represent the subscales: Influence of Religion (Influ of Rel), Parental Control (Par Control), Discipline, and Openness to Outside Resources (Openness).

responded to the items within each factor in similar ways, compared to the way in which they responded to items within the other three factors. For a simplified example, participant 1 may have responded with mostly 5s to the items within Factor 1 mostly 1s to the items within Factor 2, mostly 2's to items within Factor 3, and mostly 4s to items in Factor 4, whereas participant 2 may have responded with mostly 4s to the items within Factor 1, mostly 3s to the items in Factor 2, mostly 1s to items within Factor 3, and mostly 5s to items within Factor 4. Because the participants responded with consistent responses for items within each factor, the items were grouped accordingly, even though participants 1 and 2 responded differently from each other (Hair et al., 2006).

Within the overarching topic of parenting beliefs and practices, this researcher named each of the factors based on the topic of the items in each factor. They included Influence of Religion (Factor 1), Parental Control (Factor 2), Discipline (Factor 3), and Openness to Resources (Factor 4). See Table 3 for individually listed items and factor loadings. The researcher created the items in each of the four factors in such a way that higher responses indicated a more conservative perspective. For example, higher responses to items grouped into Factor 1 would indicate that religion has a stronger influence on the participant's parenting beliefs and practices. Higher responses to items grouped into Factor 2 would indicate that the participant places a higher emphasis on parental control within his or her parenting beliefs and practices. Higher responses to items on Factor 3 would indicate that the participant is more likely to use spanking as a disciplinary practice. Higher responses to items on Factor 4 would indicate that the

participant is less receptive or open to parenting resources that are secular or originate from a non-biblically-based authority.

The researcher recoded negatively phrased items in SPSS so that they fit into the structure. Using SPSS, the researcher computed estimates of internal consistency using Cronbach's coefficient alpha for the current sample (n=148). The internal consistency estimates for the four factors were, Influence of Religion (8 items) .754; Recognition of Developmental Principles (4 items) .817; Discipline (6 items) .537; and Openness to Resources (4 items) .690. (Table 4). After running Cronbach's alpha on each factor, results showed that item 34 was negatively related to the other 5 items within Factor 3, thus lowering the alpha and suggesting that item 34 should be deleted. The researcher re-ran an exploratory factor analysis to check factor loadings without item 34. Results showed weak loadings and cross loadings for multiple items, so item 34 was retained even though it contributed to a lower estimate of internal consistency for Factor 3, Discipline. Researchers generally agree on a Cronbach alpha of .70 as the lower limit of acceptability in estimating internal consistency within a scale or factor; however, for exploratory research acceptability may decrease to .60 (Hair et al., 2006). Therefore, items within Factors 1, 2, and 4 consistently measure the same structure (Influence of Religion, Recognition of Developmental Principles, and Openness to Resources).

## Descriptive Statistics

Research participants responded to the 36 items of the PPI using a 5-point Likert scale including 1-*Strongly Disagree*, 2-*Moderately Disagree*, 3-*Not Sure*, 4-*Moderately Agree*, and 5-*Strongly Agree*. The researcher grouped the 22 items that remained after

Table 4
*Mean, Standard Deviation, and Cronbach Alpha Estimates for Four Factors*

| | M* | SD* | Alpha |
|---|---|---|---|
| Factor I (Influence of Religion) - 8 items | 3.35 | 0.696 | 0.754 |
| Factor II (Parental Control) - 4 items | 2.53 | 0.880 | 0.817 |
| Factor III (Discipline) - 6 items | 2.49 | 0.526 | 0.537 |
| Factor IV (Openness to Resources) - 4 items | 2.36 | 0.767 | 0.690 |

*Note*. * M and SD are averaged by the item numbers in each factor.
M = mean of all participant responses, according to Likert scale, to all items in each factor.

exploratory factor analysis into their respective factors. The means and standard deviations of each item have been included in Table 3, and the means and standard deviations of each factor have been included in Table 4. Because the use of exploratory factor analysis in this research study simplified the data collected from the PPI into a smaller number of factors while maintaining the quality of the data, only the means and standard deviations of the factors have been explained here. The means of each of the four Factors indicate the average mean of all 148 participant responses to all items within each factor. The total means were averaged by the item numbers in each factor. The mean and standard deviation scores for Factor 1 (Influence of Religion) were calculated to be 3.35 and .696; for Factor 2 (Parental Control), 2.53 and .880; for Factor 3 (Discipline), 2.49 and .536; and Factor 4 (Openness to Resources), 2.36 and .767.

These scores provide an overall picture of the entire sample. Results of frequency counts and percentages for participant responses to the 22 items were also grouped into two categories, defined as Parenting Beliefs and Parenting Practices and

represented in Tables 5 and 6. These groupings were created in order to providea basis for reporting results in accordance with the research questions for this study:

1. What are the basic beliefs of conservative Protestant parents regarding children?

2. What are basic parenting practices of conservative Protestant parents?

3. What consistencies or inconsistencies does child parent relationship therapy have with conservative Protestant parents' beliefs and practices regarding parenting?

The researcher identified Parenting Beliefs as theoretical statements about an individual's parenting philosophy and Parenting Practices as actions that a parent may take in response to his or her child or children. Parenting practices are often an outgrowth of beliefs and, therefore, may seem to fit into both categories. However, when ambiguities arose in the categorization process, items that contained information about parenting beliefs or practices in general were categorized as Parenting Beliefs (for example, item 23, "Older children and teens can play a useful role in helping their parents develop household rules and other parenting strategies") because, although a parent may have engaged in a behavior as a result of this belief, the item was referring to parents in general, not "me, as a parent." Items that were phrased in a more personal way (for example, item 26, "I believe it is important for me to teach my children only one religious belief system and model how they should follow it"), even though they contained the words "I believe," were categorized as Parenting Practices, because they included personal language, such as "me and my" and seemed to imply that the parent had actually engaged in a behavior. Table 9 outlines frequency counts and percentages for participant responses to the items identified by the researcher as Parenting Beliefs.

Table 5 displays the frequency counts and percentages of participant response to items categorized as Parenting Beliefs. Of the 148 participants responding according to a 5-point Likert scale (1-*Strongly Disagree*, 2-*Moderately Disagree*, 3-*Not Sure*, 4-*Moderately Agree*, and 5-*Strongly Agree*) to item 2, "Parents should direct their children to follow the parents' religious beliefs,", 1 (.7%) strongly disagreed, 4 (2.7%) mostly disagreed, 5 (3.4) were not sure, 65 (43.6%) agreed, and 74 (49.7%) strongly agreed. Of the 148 participants responding to item 9, "Elementary school-age children have the ability to contribute ideas to help parents develop useful parenting strategies," 17 (11.4%) strongly disagreed, 53 (35.6%) mostly disagreed, 27 (18.1%) were not sure, 39 (26.2%) agreed, and 13 (8.7%) strongly agreed. Of the 148 participants responding to item 10, "I believe that only someone with religious beliefs similar to my own would be able to give me useful parenting advice," 18 (21.1%) strongly disagreed, 78 (52.3%) mostly disagreed, 14 (9.4%) were not sure, 31 (20.8%) agreed, and 8 (5.4%) strongly agreed. Of the 148 participants responding to item 11, "As a parent, I believe spanking should always be utilized as part of discipline with young children," 35 (23.5%) strongly disagreed, 58 (38.9%) mostly disagreed, 14 (9.4%) were not sure, 33 (22.1%) agreed, and 9 (6.0%) strongly agreed. Of the 148 participants responding to item 12, "As a parent, I believe spanking is best utilized as a disciplinary measure in response to all acts of disobedience by children," 48 (32.2%) strongly disagreed, 65 (43.6%) mostly disagreed, 12 (8.1%) were not sure, 22 (14.8%) agreed, and 2 (1.3%) strongly agreed. Of the 148 participants responding to item 13, "Children are born with the tendency to do wrong," 12 (8.1%) strongly disagreed, 35 (23.5%) mostly disagreed, 11 (7.4%) were not sure, 45 (30.2%) agreed, and 46 (30.9%) strongly agreed.

Table 5
*Item Percentages and Frequencies for Parenting Beliefs*

| Item | Response | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | SA | MA | NS | MD | SD |
| 2. Parents should direct their children to follow the parents' religious beliefs. | 0.7 (1) | 2.7 (4) | 3.4 (5) | 43.6 (65) | 49.7 (74) |
| 9. Elementary school-age children have the ability to contribute ideas to help parents develop useful parenting strategies. | 11.4 (17) | 35.6 (53) | 18.1 (27) | 26.2 (39) | 8.7 (13) |
| 10. I believe that ONLY someone with religious beliefs similar to my own would be able to give me useful parenting advice. | 21.1 (18) | 52.3 (78) | 9.4 (14) | 20.8 (31) | 5.4 (8) |
| 11. As a parent, I believe spanking should ALWAYS be utilized as part of discipline with young children. | 23.5 (35) | 38.9 (58) | 9.4 (14) | 22.1 (33) | 6.0 (9) |
| 12. As a parent, I believe spanking is BEST utilized as a disciplinary measure in response to all acts of disobedience by children. | 32.2 (48) | 43.6 (65) | 8.1 (12) | 14.8 (22) | 1.3 (2) |
| 13. Children are born with the tendency to do wrong. | 8.1 (12) | 23.5 (35) | 7.4 (11) | 30.2 (45) | 30.9 (46) |
| 17. Children between the ages of approximately 6 and 10 do NOT have the ability to help parents generate ideas that are useful for effective parenting. | 14.8 (22) | 44.3 (66) | 18.8 (28) | 18.8 (28) | 3.4 (5) |
| 18. As a parent, I believe spanking is a useful disciplinary technique when utilized with older children and teen-agers. | 32.9 (49) | 40.3 (60) | 14.1 (21) | 10.1 (15) | 2.7 (4) |
| 23. Older children and teens can play a useful role in helping their parents develop household rules and other parenting strategies. | 19.5 (29) | 49.7 (74) | 14.1 (21) | 14.8 (22) | 2.0 (3) |
| 24. As a parent, I believe spanking is EQUALLY USEFUL as a disciplinary technique for both children AND teen-agers. | 32.9 (49) | 45.6 (68) | 9.4 (14) | 9.4 (14) | 2.7 (4) |
| 31. Regardless of age, it is Inappropriate for children to collaborate with their parents to generate parenting strategies. | 18.8 (28) | 45.6 (68) | 13.4 (20) | 18.1 (27) | 4.0 (6) |
| 35. In order to discipline a child effectively, a parent should include a discussion about why the disciplinary action was necessary. | 69.8 (104) | 26.2 (39) | 2.0 (3) | 1.3 (2) | 0.7 (1) |
| 36. Parents should expose their children to various religious belief systems to facilitate development of their children's personal religious beliefs. | 2.7 (4) | 29.5 (44) | 12.1 (18) | 26.8 (40) | 28.9 (43) |

*Note.* Numbers in parentheses indicate frequencies.
SD=*strongly disagree*, MD=*mostly disagree*, NS=*not sure*, MA=*mostly agree*, SA=*strongly agree*

Of the 148 participants responding to item 17, "Children between the ages of approximately 6 and 10 do not have the ability to help parents generate ideas that are useful for effective parenting," 22 (14.8%) strongly disagreed, 66 (44.3%) mostly disagreed, 28 (18.8%) were not sure, 28 (18.8%) agreed, and 5 (3.4%) strongly agreed. Of the 148 participants responding to item 18, "As a parent, I believe spanking is a

useful disciplinary technique when utilized with older children and teenagers," 49 (32.9%) strongly disagreed, 60 (40.3%) mostly disagreed, 21 (14.1%) were not sure, 15 (10.1%) agreed, and 4 (2.7%) strongly agreed. Of the 148 participants responding to item 23, "Older children and teens can play a useful role in helping their parents develop household rules and other parenting strategies," 29 (19.5%) strongly disagreed, 74 (49.7%) mostly disagreed, 21 (14.1%) were not sure, 22 (14.8%) agreed, and 3 (2.0%) strongly agreed. Of the 148 participants responding to item 24, "As a parent, I believe spanking is equally useful as a disciplinary technique for both young children and teenagers," 49 (32.9%) strongly disagreed, 68 (45.6%) mostly disagreed, 14 (9.4%) were not sure, 14 (9.4%) agreed, and 4 (2.7%) strongly agreed. Of the 148 participants responding to item 31, "Regardless of age, it is inappropriate for children to collaborate with their parents to generate parenting strategies," 28 (18.8%) strongly disagreed, 68 (45.6%) mostly disagreed, 20 (13.4%) were not sure, 27 (18.1%) agreed, and 6 (4.0%) strongly agreed.

Of the 148 participants responding to item 35, "In order to discipline a child effectively, a parent should include a discussion about why the disciplinary action was necessary," 104 (69.8%) strongly disagreed, 39 (26.2%) mostly disagreed, 3 (2.0%) were not sure, 2 (1.3%) agreed, and 1 (.7%) strongly agreed. Of the 148 participants responding to item 36, "Parents should expose their children to various religious belief systems to facilitate the development of their children's personal religious beliefs," 4 (2.7%) strongly disagreed, 44 (29.5%) mostly disagreed, 18 (12.1%) were not sure, 40 (26.8%) agreed, and 43 (28.9%) strongly agreed.

Table 6 displays the frequency counts and percentages of participant response to items categorized as Parenting Practices. Of the 148 participants responding to item 4, "When I experience parenting difficulties with my child, I am likely to seek help from only a biblically-based resource," 8 (5.4%) strongly disagreed, 32 (21.5%) mostly disagreed, 11 (7.4%) were not sure, 71 (47.7%) agreed, and 27 (18.1%) strongly agreed. Of the 148 participants responding to item 6, "I have a difficult time feeling like I can really connect with people who have different religious beliefs than my own," 27 (18.1%) strongly disagreed, 65 (43.6%) mostly disagreed, 9 (6.0%) were not sure, 45 (30.2%) agreed, and 3 (2.0%) strongly agreed. Of the 148 participants responding to item 14, "When I encounter parenting difficulties, I seek out a variety of parenting resources, both nonreligious and biblically-based," 29 (19.5%) strongly disagreed, 68 (45.6%) mostly disagreed, 10 (6.7%) were not sure, 36 (24.2%) agreed, and 6 (4.0%) strongly agreed. Of the 148 participants responding to item 16, "I find myself being able to interact comfortably with people who have different religious beliefs than my own," 39 (26.2%) strongly disagreed, 80 (53.7%) mostly disagreed, 10 (6.7%) were not sure, 18 (12.1%) agreed, and 2 (1.3%) strongly agreed.

Of the 148 participants responding to item 19, "I am open to gaining parenting knowledge from nonreligious experts in the field of parenting," 13 (8.7%) strongly disagreed, 59 (39.6%) mostly disagreed, 32 (21.5%) were not sure, 31 (20.8%) agreed, and 14 (9.4%) strongly agreed.

Of the 148 participants responding to item 25, "In social settings, I am usually uncomfortable interacting with individuals whose religious beliefs differ from my own," 34 (22.8%) strongly disagreed, 84 (56.4%) mostly disagreed, 15 (10.1%) were not sure,

Table 6
*Item Percentages and Frequencies for Parenting Practices*

| Item | Response | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | SA | MA | NS | MD | SD |
| 4. When I experience parenting difficulties with my child, I am likely to seek help from ONLY a biblically-based resource. | 5.4 (8) | 21.5 (32) | 7.4 (11) | 47.7 (71) | 18.1 (27) |
| 6. I have a difficult time feeling like I can REALLY CONNECT with people who have different religious beliefs from my own. | 18.1 (27) | 43.6 (65) | 6.0 (9) | 30.2 (45) | 2.0 (3) |
| 14. When I encounter parenting difficulties, I seek out a variety of parenting resources, both nonreligious and biblically-based. | 19.5 (29) | 45.6 (68) | 6.7 (10) | 24.2 (36) | 4.0 (6) |
| 16. I find myself being able to interact comfortably with people who have different religious beliefs from my own. | 26.2 (39) | 53.7 (80) | 6.7 (10) | 12.1 (18) | 1.3 (2) |
| 19. I am open to gaining parenting knowledge from NON-religious experts in the field of parenting. | 8.7 (13) | 39.6 (59) | 21.5 (32) | 20.8 (31) | 9.4 (14) |
| 25. In social settings, I am usually Uncomfortable interacting with individuals whose religious beliefs differ from my own. | 22.8 (34) | 56.4 (84) | 10.1 (15) | 10.1 (15) | 0.7 (1) |
| 26. I believe it is important for me to teach my children ONLY ONE religious belief system and model how they should follow it. | 2.7 (4) | 14.1 (21) | 4.0 (6) | 34.9 (52) | 44.3 (66) |
| 29. I have experienced feeling REALLY CONNECTED with one or more people who have religious beliefs that differ from my own. | 14.8 (22) | 36.9 (55) | 14.1 (21) | 26.8 (40) | 7.4 (11) |
| 34. It is my responsibility as a parent to teach my children religious and spiritual truths. | 1.3 (2) | 0.0 | 0.0 | 6.7 (10) | 91.9 (137) |

*Note.* Numbers in parentheses indicate frequencies.
SD=*strongly disagree*, MD=*mostly disagree*, NS=*not sure*, MA=*mostly agree*, SA=*strongly agree*

15 (10.1%) agreed, and 1 (.7%) strongly agreed. Of the 148 participants responding to item 26, “I believe it is important for me to teach my children only one religious belief system and model how they should follow it,” 4 (2.7%) strongly disagreed, 21 (14.1%) mostly disagreed, 6 (4.0%) were not sure, 52 (34.9%) agreed, and 66 (44.3%) strongly agreed.

Of the 148 participants responding to item 29, “I have experienced feeling really connected with one or more people who have religious beliefs that differ from my own,” 22 (14.8%) strongly disagreed, 55 (36.9%) mostly disagreed, 21 (14.1%) were not sure, 40 (26.8%) agreed, and 11 (7.4%) strongly agreed. Of the 148 participants responding according to item 34, “It is my responsibility as a parent to teach my children religious

and spiritual truths," 2 (1.3%) strongly disagreed, 10 (20.8%) agreed, and 137 (91.9%) strongly agreed.

## Multiple Regression

The researcher conducted a correlation analysis among the four factors using the product-moment correlation coefficient, Pearson r. Cohen (1988) defined strength of correlations as small (.00-.30), medium (.30-.50), and large (.50-1.00). A small positive correlation of .215 was found between Factors 1 and 2, implying that higher scores in participant responses to items in Factor 1 (Influence of Religion) indicated higher scores in participant response to items in Factor 2 (Parental Control). A medium positive correlation of .337 was found between Factors 1 and 4, indicating that higher scores in participant responses to items in Factor 1 (Influence of Religion) indicated higher scores in participant response to items in Factor 4 (Openness to Resources). A small positive correlation of .241 was found between Factors 2 and 4, implying that higher scores in participant responses to items in Factor 2 (Parental Control) indicated higher scores in participant response to items in Factor 4 (Openness to Resources). The researcher identified all correlation values as statistically significant at the $p < .01$ level (see Table 7). Due to the small correlations among Factors 1, 2, and 4, as well as no correlations between Factor 3 and any of the other factors, the researcher determined that 4 separate multiple regression analyses be conducted.

The researcher criterion coded the recoded demographic data. Means and standard deviations for the eight variables are reported, by factors in Table 8. For criterion coding, the researcher utilized the means of all the participant responses to the

Table 7
*Correlations Among Factors*

| | Factor I | Factor II | Factor III | Factor IV |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Factor I (Influence of Religion) | | | | |
| Pearson Correlation | 1 | .215** | 0.108 | .337** |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | | 0.009 | 0.189 | 0 |
| N | 149 | 149 | 149 | 148 |
| Factor II (Integration of Child Development Principles) | | | | |
| Pearson Correlation | .215** | 1 | 0.092 | .241** |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.009 | | 0.267 | 0.003 |
| N | 149 | 149 | 149 | 148 |
| Factor III (Discipline) | | | | |
| Pearson Correlation | 0.108 | 0.092 | 1 | 0.089 |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.189 | 0.267 | | 0.282 |
| N | 149 | 149 | 149 | 148 |
| Factor IV (Openness to Resources) | | | | |
| Pearson Correlation | .337** | .241** | 0.089 | 1 |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 | 0.003 | 0.282 | |
| N | 148 | 148 | 148 | 148 |

*Note*. ** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

individual demographic items in place of the original categorical codes (Schumacker & Williams, 1993).

The researcher grouped together the eight predictor variables (demographic variables) to created a new, single variable (predictor variable) for the multiple regression analyses, then conducted four multiple regression analyses, as shown in Table 9, to determine whether the combined demographic variables could explain any significant variance in each of the four factors (criterion variables): Influence of Religion, Parental Control, Discipline, and Openness to Resources. Results indicated that the eight demographic variables together significantly predicted 15.6% ($r^2$=.156) of the participants' variability on Factor 1, Influence of Religion, $F(8,140) = 3.232$, $p<.05$.

Table 8

*Descriptive Statistics of the Four Factors by the Recoded Demographics of the Participants*

| Variable | F1 (Influ of Rel) | | | F2 (Par Control) | | | F3 (Disc) | | | F4 (Openness) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | SD | n | M | SD | n | M | SD | n | M | SD | n |
| Gender | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1=Male | 3.23 | 0.585 | 52 | 2.55 | 0.880 | 52 | 2.53 | 0.587 | 52 | 2.28 | 0.700 | 52 |
| 2=Female | 3.42 | 0.742 | 97 | 2.51 | 0.884 | 97 | 2.47 | 0.493 | 97 | 2.41 | 0.800 | 97 |
| Age | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1=20-39 | 3.41 | 0.662 | 92 | 2.40 | 0.886 | 92 | 2.47 | 0.506 | 92 | 2.40 | 0.696 | 91 |
| 2=40-69 | 3.26 | 0.745 | 57 | 2.72 | 0.839 | 57 | 2.52 | 0.561 | 57 | 2.31 | 0.872 | 57 |
| Education Level | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1=B/t HS grad and Assoc. degree | 3.34 | 0.675 | 69 | 2.69 | 0.772 | 69 | 2.68 | 0.541 | 69 | 2.42 | 0.741 | 69 |
| 2=College degree or more | 3.36 | 0.717 | 80 | 2.38 | 0.945 | 80 | 2.33 | 0.461 | 80 | 2.31 | 0.790 | 79 |
| Age of Oldest Child | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1=0 to 5 years | 3.48 | 0.612 | 52 | 2.44 | 0.988 | 52 | 2.37 | 0.448 | 52 | 2.45 | 0.633 | 52 |
| 2=6 to 18 years | 3.25 | 0.726 | 61 | 2.40 | 0.774 | 61 | 2.54 | 0.558 | 61 | 2.30 | 0.824 | 60 |
| 3=19 or more years | 3.34 | 0.747 | 36 | 2.86 | 0.820 | 36 | 2.58 | 0.558 | 36 | 2.36 | 0.767 | 36 |
| Total household income range last year | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1=Up to $50,000 | 3.36 | 0.727 | 23 | 2.55 | 0.731 | 23 | 2.54 | 0.507 | 23 | 2.37 | 0.750 | 23 |
| 2=$50,001 - $80,000 | 3.39 | 0.583 | 39 | 2.60 | 0.863 | 39 | 2.54 | 0.521 | 39 | 2.46 | 0.687 | 38 |
| 3=$80,001 + | 3.33 | 0.739 | 87 | 2.49 | 0.929 | 87 | 2.46 | 0.537 | 87 | 2.32 | 0.808 | 87 |
| Church Attendance | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1=Weekly or less | 3.21 | 0.659 | 77 | 2.49 | 0.855 | 77 | 2.53 | 0.555 | 77 | 2.37 | 0.746 | 76 |
| 2=Multiple times a week | 3.51 | 0.706 | 72 | 2.56 | 0.910 | 72 | 2.45 | 0.494 | 72 | 2.35 | 0.794 | 72 |
| Religious Beliefs | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1=Conservative | 3.48 | 0.672 | 103 | 2.64 | 0.882 | 103 | 2.46 | 0.506 | 103 | 2.47 | 0.760 | 102 |
| 2=Moderate | 3.08 | 0.676 | 46 | 2.27 | 0.827 | 46 | 2.56 | 0.570 | 46 | 2.13 | 0.737 | 46 |
| Church Location | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1=Church 1 | 3.18 | 0.652 | 52 | 2.43 | 0.768 | 52 | 2.45 | 0.586 | 52 | 2.33 | 0.750 | 52 |
| 2=Church 2 | 3.43 | 0.691 | 45 | 2.47 | 0.918 | 45 | 2.47 | 0.409 | 45 | 2.37 | 0.808 | 45 |
| 3=Church 3 | 3.57 | 0.703 | 31 | 2.54 | 1.025 | 31 | 2.31 | 0.370 | 31 | 2.52 | 0.734 | 30 |
| 4=Church 4 | 3.30 | 0.733 | 21 | 2.87 | 0.801 | 21 | 2.90 | 0.607 | 21 | 2.23 | 0.782 | 21 |

Results also indicated that the combined predictor variables significantly predicted 12.7% ($r^2$=.127) of the variability in the participants' responses on Factor 2, Parental Control, $F(8, 140) = 2.548$, $p<.05$. Further statistically significant results were found in that the predictor variables explained 20% ($r^2$=.200) of the variability in participants' responses on Factor 3, Discipline, $F(8, 140) = 4.377$, $p<.05$.

Results indicated that the combined predictor variables predicted only 1% of the variability in the participants' responses on Factor 4, Openness to Resources. Results were not statistically significant for the predictor variables' explanation of variability in participants' responses, $F(8,140) = 1.335$, $p>.05$ (see Table 9). Therefore, the combined demographic variables of gender, age, education level, age of oldest child, household income level, church attendance, religious beliefs, and church location helped to predict differences in participants' responses in this study regarding influence of religion, parental control, and discipline on conservative Protestants' parenting beliefs and practices.

Additional statistical information for the multiple regression analyses between the demographic items (predictor variable) and each of the four factors (criterion variables) are included in Table 10. The first column lists the unstandardized regression coefficient (B), which is obtained for each of the predictor variables by dividing Pearson's r of each factor by R from the regression analysis.The second column provides the standardized regression coefficients (Beta weights, β) for each of the predictor variables, which allow for direct comparisons between coefficients (Hair, 2006). The third column lists the t-scores and the asterisks indicate levels of statistical significance (*p<.05; **p<.01). The fourth column shows significance in terms of

Table 9
*Regression Summary*

| DV | Source | SS | df | MS | F | Sig | $r^2$ | Adj $r^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Influence of Religion | | | | | | | | |
| | Regression | 11.171 | 8 | 1.396 | 3.232* | 0.002 | 0.156 | 0.108 |
| | Residual | 60.487 | 140 | 0.432 | | | | |
| | Total | 71.658 | 148 | | | | | |
| Parental Control | | | | | | | | |
| | Regression | 14.564 | 8 | 1.821 | 2.548* | 0.013 | 0.127 | 0.077 |
| | Residual | 100.029 | 140 | 0.714 | | | | |
| | Total | 114.593 | 148 | | | | | |
| Discipline | | | | | | | | |
| | Regression | 8.207 | 8 | 1.026 | 4.377** | 0.000 | 0.200 | 0.154 |
| | Residual | 32.811 | 140 | 0.234 | | | | |
| | Total | 41.019 | 148 | | | | | |
| Openness to Resources | | | | | | | | |
| | Regression | 6.167 | 8 | 0.771 | 1.335 | 0.231 | 0.071 | 0.018 |
| | Residual | 80.250 | 139 | 0.577 | | | | |
| | Total | 86.417 | 147 | | | | | |

*Notes*. *p <.05, **p <.01.

DV= Dependent (Criterion) variables are the Four Factors.
Predictor variables used for this regression were the recoded demographic variables: gender, age, education level, age of oldest child, household income, church attendance, religious beliefs, and church location.

between a given predictor variable and the synthetic variable, predicted *Y* or $\hat{Y}$. p-values, and the last two columns include the structure coefficient ($r_s$) and the squared structure coefficient ($r_s^2$). The structure coefficient ($r_s$) is the bivariate correlation. In this case, the degree of relationships between each of the predictor variables and participant responses to items in each of the four factors ($\hat{Y}= \beta_1x_1+ \beta_2x_2+ \beta_3x_3+\ldots$). The structure coefficient also provides information regarding the practical significance, or usefulness of the results (Courville & Thompson, 2001). The squared structure coefficient reveals the proportion of variability within each factor that each predictor variable can explain in the presence of the other seven predictor variables. Because reporting Beta alone can, in certain cases, result in insufficient reporting of significant

results, the researcher reported structure coefficients in Tables 9 and 10 (Courville & Thompson, 2001).

To determine significance of the predictor variables for each of the four factors, the researcher used a combination of three factors: statistical significance at $p<.05$; practical significance strength, as measured by the structure coefficient, and percentage of variance that can be predicted in each of the factors by the predictor variables, as measured by the squared structure coefficient. Because Beta weights are context dependent and can change as a result of different combinations of predictors, the researcher utilized both Beta weights and structure coefficients to determine the significance of the predictors (Courville & Thompson, 2001).

As shown in Table 10, in the presence of all eight predictor variables, church attendance and religious beliefs were both significant predictors ($p<.01$) of the variability in responses in Factor 1, Influence of Religion. Results from the multiple regression analysis revealed the predictor variable, religious beliefs, as the most important predictor for Factor 1, based on the largest Beta weights ($\beta=.251$), structure coefficient ($r_s=.674$), and t-values ($t=2.986$). Both $\beta$ and the structure coefficient values are in the positive direction, suggesting a direct correlation between the predictor variable, religious beliefs and Factor 1, Influence of Religion. Therefore, high values on religious beliefs would correspond with high values on Factor 1. Items on Factor 1, Influence of Religion, were phrased in such a way that higher scores indicated a stronger influence of religion on a participant's parenting beliefs and practices.

Table 8 outlines the means of the item responses to the participants' demographic information items, which replaced the categorical codes for the purpose of

Table 10
*Predictor Variables' Coefficients*

| | Variable | B | Beta (β) | t | Sig (p) | $r_s$ | $r_s^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Influence of Religion | (Constant) | -2.545 | | -0.115 | 0.909 | | |
| | Gender | 0.790 | 0.105 | 1.267 | 0.207 | 0.338 | 0.114 |
| | Age | 0.479 | 0.048 | 0.572 | 0.568 | 0.256 | 0.066 |
| | Education Level | -3.062 | -0.041 | -0.496 | 0.621 | 0.034 | 0.001 |
| | Age of Oldest Child | 0.189 | 0.027 | 0.308 | 0.758 | 0.355 | 0.126 |
| | Household income | 1.024 | 0.041 | 0.510 | 0.611 | 0.101 | 0.010 |
| | Church Attendance | 0.966 | 0.208 | 2.606 ** | 0.010 | 0.546 | 0.298 |
| | Religious Beliefs | 0.943 | 0.251 | 2.986 ** | 0.003 | 0.674 | 0.455 |
| | Church Location | 0.430 | 0.094 | 1.061 | 0.290 | 0.552 | 0.305 |
| Parental Control | (Constant) | -6.864 | | -0.513 | 0.609 | | |
| | Gender | -0.093 | -0.002 | -0.022 | 0.983 | 0.054 | 0.003 |
| | Age | 0.487 | 0.087 | 0.792 | 0.430 | 0.500 | 0.250 |
| | Education Level | 0.917 | 0.162 | 1.902 | 0.059 | 0.496 | 0.246 |
| | Age of Oldest Child | 0.538 | 0.117 | 1.041 | 0.300 | 0.609 | 0.371 |
| | Household income | 0.129 | 0.007 | 0.086 | 0.932 | 0.155 | 0.024 |
| | Church Attendance | 0.191 | 0.008 | 0.094 | 0.925 | 0.115 | 0.013 |
| | Religious Beliefs | 1.265 | 0.250 | 3.031 ** | 0.003 | 0.553 | 0.306 |
| | Church Location | 0.285 | 0.047 | 0.470 | 0.639 | 0.464 | 0.215 |
| Discipline | | | | | | | |
| | (Constant) | 6.686 | | 0.853 | 0.395 | | |
| | Gender | -0.108 | -0.006 | -0.069 | 0.945 | 0.114 | 0.013 |
| | Age | -4.584 | -0.195 | -1.985 * | 0.049 | 0.095 | 0.009 |
| | Education Level | 0.726 | 0.237 | 2.851 ** | 0.005 | 0.729 | 0.531 |
| | Age of Oldest Child | 0.589 | 0.100 | 1.024 | 0.308 | 0.380 | 0.144 |
| | Household income | -0.449 | -0.035 | -0.438 | 0.662 | 0.173 | 0.030 |
| | Church Attendance | 1.253 | 0.099 | 1.290 | 0.199 | 0.178 | 0.032 |
| | Religious Beliefs | -0.070 | -0.006 | -0.078 | 0.938 | 0.198 | 0.039 |
| | Church Location | 0.961 | 0.325 | 3.476 ** | 0.001 | 0.756 | 0.571 |
| Openness to Resources | (Constant) | -13.148 | | -0.726 | 0.469 | | |
| | Gender | 0.915 | 0.070 | 0.781 | 0.436 | 0.290 | 0.084 |
| | Age | 0.074 | 0.004 | 0.043 | 0.966 | 0.205 | 0.042 |
| | Education Level | 1.668 | 0.124 | 1.416 | 0.159 | 0.271 | 0.073 |
| | Age of Oldest Child | 0.401 | 0.034 | 0.364 | 0.717 | 0.308 | 0.095 |
| | Household income | 0.586 | 0.046 | 0.546 | 0.586 | 0.300 | 0.090 |
| | Church Attendance | 1.342 | 0.015 | 0.182 | 0.856 | 0.049 | 0.002 |
| | Religious Beliefs | 1.010 | 0.207 | 2.350 * | 0.020 | 0.766 | 0.587 |
| | Church Location | 0.569 | 0.066 | 0.677 | 0.499 | 0.441 | 0.194 |

*Note*. $r_s$= structural coefficient; $r_s^2$= squared structure coefficient.
*p <.05, **p<.01.
Factor 1 (Influence of Religion), Factor 2 (Parental Control), Factor 3 (Discipline), and Factor 4 (Openness to Resources).

criterion coding. The means on the item responses for religious beliefs on Factor 1 were Conservative (m=3.48), and Moderate (m=3.08). Therefore, the more conservative (in accordance with the 5-point Likert scale utilized in the PPI) a participant's response regarding religious beliefs, the stronger the influence of religion on his or her parenting beliefs and practices. The squared structure coefficient value ($r_s^2$=.455) indicated that in the presence of the other 7 predictor variables, Religious Beliefs, predicted 45% of the total variance in Factor 1.The predictor variable, church attendance also revealed importance as a predictor for Factor 1, based on the Beta weight (β=.208), structure coefficient ($r_s$=.546), and t-values (t=2.606). Both β and the structure coefficient values are in the positive direction, suggesting a direct correlation between the predictor variable church attendance, and Factor 1, Influence of Religion. Therefore, high values on church attendance would correspond with high values on Factor 1. The means on the item responses for church attendance on Factor 1 were Weekly or less (m=3.21) and Multiple times a week (m=3.51). Therefore, the more times a week an individual attends church, (in accordance with the 5-point Likert scale used in the PPI), the stronger the influence of religion on his or her parenting beliefs and practices.

The squared structure coefficient value ($r_s^2$=.298) indicated that in the presence of the other seven predictor variables, church attendance, predicted nearly 30% of the total variance in Factor 1. Using the combination of three factors (statistical significance at $p<.05$, practical significance strength as measure by the structure coefficient, and % of variance that can be predicted in each of the factors by the predictor variables, as measured by the structure coefficient squared) for determining significance of the

predictor variables in Factor 1, the researcher determined that all remaining predictor variables were insignificant.

Results from the multiple regression analysis on Factor 2, as shown in Table 10, indicated that in the presence of all 8 predictor variables, Religious Beliefs was the only significant predictor ($p<.01$) of the variability in responses to items in Factor 2, Parental Control. Based on the values for Beta weight ($\beta=.250$), structure coefficient ($r_s=.553$), and t ($t=3.031$) and the positive direction of both $\beta$ and the structure coefficient values, a direct correlation between the ($m=2.27$). Therefore, the more conservative (in accordance with the 5-point predictor variable, Religious Beliefs and Factor 2, Parental Control was established. Items on Factor 2, Parental Control, were phrased in such a way that higher scores indicated greater emphasis on parental control in a participant's parenting beliefs and practices.

High values on Religious Beliefs correspond with high values on Factor 2. The means on the item responses for Religious Beliefs on Factor 2 were Conservative ($m=2.64$) and Moderate Likert scale utilized in the PPI) a participant's response regarding religious beliefs, the greater the emphasis on Parental Control in the participant's parenting beliefs and practices. The squared structure coefficient score ($r_s^2=.306$) indicated that in the presence of the other seven predictor variables, religious beliefs, predicted 30% of the total variance in Factor 2. Using the combination of three factors (statistical significance at $p<.05$, practical significance strength as measured by the structure coefficient, and % of variance that can be predicted in each of the factors by the predictor variables, as measured by the structure coefficient squared) for

determining significance of the predictor variables in Factor 2, the researcher determined that all remaining predictor variables were insignificant.

As shown in Table 10, in the presence of all eight predictor variables, church location was a significant predictor of the variability in responses to items in Factor 3, Discipline. Results from the multiple regression analysis revealed the predictor variable church location was statistically significant at the $p<.01$ level and was the most important predictor for Factor 3, based on the highest Beta weight ($\beta=.325$), structure coefficient ($r_s=.571$), and t-values ($t=3.476$). Both $\beta$ and the structure coefficient values are in the positive direction, suggesting a direct correlation between the predictor variable church location and Factor 3, Discipline. Therefore, high values on church location would correspond with high values on Factor 3.

Items on Factor 3, Discipline, were phrased in such a way that higher scores indicated a more authoritarian or punitive approach to child discipline. Table 8 outlines the means of the item responses to the participants' demographic information items, which replaced the categorical codes for the purpose of criterion coding. The means on the item responses for church location on Factor 3 were Church 1 ($m=2.45$), Church 2 ($m=2.47$), Church 3 ($m=2.31$), and Church 4 ($m=2.90$). Church 4 had the highest mean score, indicating that the individuals who participated in this research study from Church 4 reported more authoritarian or punitive discipline practices than individuals from the other three church locations. The squared structure coefficient value ($r_s^2=.571$) indicated that in the presence of the other seven predictor variables, church location predicted 57% of the total variance in Factor 3.

Results from the multiple regression analysis revealed the predictor variable, education level, was statistically significant at the $p<.01$ level and revealed a β score of .237, structure coefficient score of .729, and a t-value of 2.851. Both β and the structure coefficient values are in the positive direction, suggesting a direct correlation between the predictor variable, education level and Factor 3, Discipline. Therefore, high values on education level would correspond with high values on Factor 3. Items on Factor 3, Discipline, were phrased in such a way that higher scores indicated a more authoritarian or punitive approach to child discipline.

Table 8 outlines the means of the item responses to the participants' demographic information items, which replaced the categorical codes for the purpose of criterion coding. The means on the item responses for education level on Factor 3 were At least a high school diploma, but no more than an associate's degree (m=2.68), a bachelor's degree or more (m=2.33). At least a high school diploma, but no more than an associate's degree had the highest mean score, indicating that the individuals who had less education reported more authoritarian or punitive discipline practices. The squared structure coefficient value ($r_s^2$=.531) indicated that in the presence of the other seven predictor variables, education level, predicted 53% of the total variance in Factor 3.

Additional results from the multiple regression analysis indicated the predictor variable, age, barely met the threshold of statistical significance at the $p<.05$ level with a p-value of .049. Low Beta (β= -.195), structure coefficient ($r_s$=.095), and squared structure coefficient ($r_s^2$=.009) scores indicated a consistent lack of importance for the predictor variable age therefore, the researcher determined that no further reporting or

discussion was necessary. Using the combination of three factors (statistical significance at $p<.05$, practical significance strength as measure by the structure coefficient, and % of variance that can be predicted in each of the factors by the predictor variables, as measured by the structure coefficient squared) for determining significance of the predictor variables in Factor 3, the researcher determined that all remaining predictor variables were insignificant.

Results from the multiple regression analysis on Factor 4, as shown in Table 10, indicated that in the presence of all eight predictor variables, religious beliefs was the only significant predictor ($p<.01$) of the variability in responses to items in Factor 4, Openness to Resources. Based on the values for β (.207), structure coefficient ($r_s$=.766), and t (t=2.350) and the positive direction of both Beta and the structure coefficient values, a direct correlation between the predictor variable religious beliefs and Factor 4, was established. Items on Factor 4, Openness to Resources, were phrased in such a way that higher scores indicated less openness to secular or non-biblically-based parenting resources.

High values on religious beliefs correspond with high values on Factor 4. The means on the item responses for religious beliefs on Factor 4 were Conservative (m=2.47) and Moderate (m=2.13). Therefore, the more conservative (in accordance with the 5-point Likert scale utilized in the PPI) a participant's response regarding religious beliefs, the less openness they had to secular or non-biblically-based parenting resources. The squared structure coefficient value ($r_s^2$=.587) indicated that in the presence of the other seven predictor variables, religious beliefs, predicted nearly 59% of the total variance in Factor 4. Using the combination of three factors (statistical

significance at $p<.05$, practical significance strength as measured by the structure coefficient, and % of variance that can be predicted in each of the factors by the predictor variables, as measured by the squared structure coefficient) for determining significance of the predictor variables in Factor 4, the researcher determined that all remaining predictor variables were insignificant.

# Discussion

## *Introduction*

This study was conducted for the purpose of determining the cultural applicability of child parent relationship therapy for conservative Protestant parents. Religion has been recognized as a profound factor in the lives of Americans (Gallup, 2001). Although the impact of religion on the lives of individuals is often difficult for researchers to clarify, some have concluded that religion plays a significant role in the lives of many individuals by providing a potential resource of support and hope (Mahoney et al., 2001).

As part of the growing emphasis on multiculturalism in counseling, professional organizations have addressed religion as a cultural difference (APA, 2002). Researchers have even suggested referring to conservative Protestants as a unique subculture with qualitatively different characteristics (Wilcox, 2002). However, a lack of adequate multicultural training among mental health programs has resulted in low awareness among practitioners (Sue et al., 1999). Although some mental health practitioners have reported affiliations with religious groups, and many believe a connection exists between spiritual health and mental health (Carlson et al., 2002), religion and spirituality continue to be misunderstood by many mental health professionals (Walker et al., 2004). Researchers have identified a trend among mental health practitioners to ignore spiritual issues, pathologize individuals who have strong religious or spiritual beliefs, or treat spirituality and religiosity as symptoms of more complex problems (Pargament & Mahoney, 2002).

Child parent relationship therapy, a modification of Bernard and Louise Guerney's filial therapy by Garry Landreth (Landreth & Bratton, 2006), has been identified as a relationship-enhancing tool for parents and their children (Landreth & Bratton, 2006). Numerous researchers have modified CPRT in terms of structure, format, and language to better meet the needs of different cultural groups. Many of these modifications have yielded positive results (Lee & Landreth, 2003; Smith & Landreth, 2003; Ray et al., 2001; Yuen et al., 2002). After an exhaustive review of the literature, this researcher found no existing research regarding modifications to CPRT for Protestant parents or investigating the need for modifications due to religiously based cultural differences. The researcher concluded that a thorough investigation of conservative Protestant's beliefs and practices regarding parenting was necessary in order to ascertain the cultural applicability of CPRT for conservative Protestant parents.

The popularity of parenting-focused parachurch ministries, such as James Dobson's Focus on the Family, church ministries for children, and the abundance of parenting literature available in Christian bookstores, show that Protestant parenting experts are comprehensively communicating their ideas. Through this body of literature, experts convey parenting instructions from a biblical perspective. Using the Bible as the basis of truth, they propose ideals including forgiveness, sacrificial love, modeling godly qualities to children so that they grow to love and trust God, encouraging respect for authority, responsibility, self-discipline, and obedience (Dobson, 1978, 1992; Ezzo & Bucknam, 1999). They charge parents with closely monitoring their children, setting limits on behavior, and consistently enforcing limits through the use of preventative methods, positive reinforcement, and spanking (Boggs, 1983).

Although much information exists regarding how Protestant parents should be parenting their children, not as much is available for clarifying exactly how they are parenting their children. For example, researchers found that conservative Protestant fathers reportedly were more likely to hug their preschool children than fathers with more liberal theological beliefs (Wilcox, 1998). Protestant fathers reportedly engaged in more rule-making and rule-enforcing behaviors, were more likely to respond to their children with warmth and emotional support, and to express affection toward their children compared to non-Protestant and religiously unaffiliated fathers (Bartkowski & Xu, 2000).

To complicate matters further, methodological flaws and biases are fairly commonplace within the professional research regarding conservative Protestants and parenting, specifically related to spanking (Capps, 1992; Dyslin & Thomsen, 2005). Researchers have asserted a link between commonly held conservative Protestant beliefs, such as an emphasis on child obedience and the use of corporal punishment (Bartkowski, 1996; Ellison, 1996). Because conservative Protestant parents are more likely than parents with more liberal religious beliefs or no religious affiliation to utilize corporal punishment as a disciplinary tactic, they have been criticized as harming the psychological development of their children (Ezzo, 1998; Lowe, 1998). Extrapolating from research results that revealed positive correlations between Protestant parents and the use of corporal punishment, Capps (1992) asserted that conservative Protestant religious ideas marginalize and torment children and can, therefore, be considered a form of abuse.

Researchers have called for more empirical studies with individuals who profess to be religious or spiritual in order to focus on their values, motivations, and beliefs to assist mental health professionals in better understanding and responding to this population (Lowe, 1998; Pargament & Mahoney, 2002). Due to the dearth in amount and quality of research related to conservative Protestant parents, this researcher developed an instrument with a three-fold purpose: (a) to investigate parenting beliefs and practices of conservative Protestant parents, (b) to collect and analyze information with a reliable measure, and (c) to provide a means for future research on conservative Protestant parents. Discussions of the development of the instrument, results of data analyses, comparisons of findings from this study with past studies, implications for the use of CPRT with conservative Protestant parents, limitations of this study, and suggestions for future research have been included in the following sections.

*Development of the Instrument*

When attempting to measure attitudes through the use of questionnaires, researchers should take steps to increase validity and reliability (Gall et al., 2003). First, the researcher should conduct an exhaustive literature review to identify any existing instruments that may be appropriate for the study. When developing items for a questionnaire that measures attitudes, a researcher must attend to the issue of reliability. Whereas questionnaires designed to gather discrete facts can contain items that individually collect different information, referred to as one-item tests, questionnaires designed to assess attitudes should contain multiple items that assess the same aspect of an attitude. They should also provide the option of a range of responses, such as a Likert scale, instead of a yes/no response option. Researchers

also recommend focus groups and pilot tests for the purpose of checking reliability and validity (Gall et al., 2003).

Throughout the process of the development of the PPI, this researcher followed the suggestions for developing a questionnaire for measuring attitudes. The researcher developed multiple items and conducted reliability estimates, using Cronbach's coefficient alpha, after each round of pilot tests and the final administration of the PPI. Measurements of validity are discussed in the section Suggestions for Future Research. The researcher conducted a focus group to gather opinions of the PPI from experts in the field of counseling, who were also parents and professed a variety of religious and spiritual beliefs, including conservative Protestantism. Through this process, the researcher confirmed the content, or face validity, of the PPI.

Exploratory factor analysis was applied to the 148 observations for the 36 items of the PPI. Exploratory factor analysis allowed the researcher to identify items that were contributing to a decrease in internal consistency, a decrease in percentage of explained variance, and a lack of parsimony in terms of factor loadings. The researcher followed steps for exploratory factor analysis outlined by Hair et al. (2006). The number of factors was reduced from eight to four, and the researcher deleted 14 items from the original 36, leaving 22 items. Results of the deletion of items revealed an increase in internal consistency, from .75 to .77, as measure by Cronbach's coefficient alpha.

Because Cronbach's alpha scores are expected to have a direct relationship to the number of items on a scale (as the number of items on a scale increase, Cronbach's alpha is expected to increase), the researcher concluded that the deletion of the 14 items had a positive impact on the reliability of the PPI. Deletion of 14 items also

contributed to an increase in total percentage variance explained from 33% with the original 36 items to 48.8% with the 22 items that remained. This change supported the decision to delete the 14 items by increasing the ability of the four factors within the PPI to predict nearly 49% of the variations in the participant responses, a value considered acceptable in exploratory social science research (Hair et al., 2006).

The consistency in subject matter within each of the factors provided support for the researcher's decision to decrease the number of factors from 8 to 4 for exploratory factor analysis. Within the overarching topic of parenting beliefs and practices, this researcher named each of the factors based upon the topic of the items within each factor. They included Influence of Religion (Factor 1), Parental Control (Factor 2), Discipline (Factor 3), and Openness to Resources (Factor 4). Although most of the items within each of the four factors were grouped not only statistically, but logically based upon subject matter, the researcher identified two inconsistencies. Items within Influence of Religion included information related specifically to teaching children religious beliefs and gaining parenting resources from religious versus nonreligious sources. "Children are born with the tendency to do wrong" loaded with these items. This statement is consistent with teachings frequently found in conservative Protestant parenting manuals (Dobson, 1992; Ezzo & Bucknam, 1999), such as, children are born with a sinful nature. Because items within factors are highly correlated, it would make sense that participants who indicated a high influence of religion on their parenting beliefs and practices would likely accept that children are born with a tendency to do wrong.

An inconsistency was also detected in relation to how conservative Protestants in this study viewed discipline. Statistical results revealed a relationship between conservative Protestant perspectives concerning disciplinary measures, specifically related to spanking, and religious education. It is possible that conservative Protestant parents in this study view these two topics as somewhat integrated. They may also view both discipline and religious education as equally important responsibilities of a conservative Protestant parent. Further research is needed to understand this relationship more clearly.

Correlational analyses were conducted using Pearson's r to estimate the strength and direction of relationships among the four factors. Small correlations among Influence of Religion, Parental Control, and Openness to Resources, as well as negligible correlations between Discipline and any of the other factors, allowed the researcher to conclude that the PPI was measuring four qualitatively different aspects of parenting beliefs and practices. Internal consistency estimates revealed that the PPI measured Influence of Religion, Parental Control, and Openness to Resources with an acceptable degree of internal consistency (Hair et al., 2006). Internal consistency estimates revealed that conservative Protestant responses regarding Discipline could not be considered acceptably reliable in this study (Hair et al., 2006).

This study resulted in the development of an instrument, the PPI, used in this study to investigate beliefs and practices of conservative Protestants. Compliance with recommended steps for exploratory factor analysis (Hair et al., 2006) and results of exploratory factor analysis that include strong loadings across factors, an increase in estimates of internal consistency, and an increase in percentage explained variance all

point to the appropriate use of exploratory factor analysis in developing the PPI. Compliance with recommendations for development of instruments for assessing attitudes (Gall et al., 2003), as well as an acceptable level of estimated reliability, measured by Cronbach's alpha, of the PPI both provide evidence of the usefulness of this instrument.

*Results of Data Analyses and Comparisons With Past Studies*

Multiple regression analyses between each of the factors and the criterion coded demographic variables allowed the researcher to identify demographic variables with significant power to predict variation in participant responses to each of the factors.

Results showed that the more times a week an individual attends church, the stronger the influence of religion on his or her parenting beliefs and practices. This finding seems to allude to the idea that conservative Protestants who regularly attend church are integrating the teachings they are hearing into their lives. Conservative Protestants who frequently attend church seem to value their religious beliefs and want to pass them on to their children. They seem to place importance on their religious beliefs and want to parent their children in accordance with them. Regular participation in church services and church-related activities has been shown to have a significant impact on family life. Brody et al. (1996) investigated the influence of parental religiosity, defined as frequency of church attendance and perceived importance of church attendance, on numerous aspects of family life by using a sample of Southern Baptist, African American families living in rural areas in the southern United States. Researchers discovered that higher levels of religiosity in the parents were significantly

related to cohesiveness among family members, low levels of conflict between parents, and fewer behavioral problems with the children in these families (Brody et al., 1996).

Results indicated that the more religiously conservative a participant, the stronger the influence of religion on his or her parenting beliefs and practices. In this study conservative or moderate religious beliefs were stronger predictors of the influence of religion on parenting practices and beliefs than the frequency of church attendance. This finding supports a previous study by Wilcox (1998) in which he concluded that conservative ideology seemed to have a greater influence on parenting behaviors than attendance and participation in a conservative Protestant church.

Religious beliefs were also a significant predictor of Parental Control, predicting 30% of the variance in responses to items within this factor. The more conservative the reported religious beliefs of participants, the less likely they were to report a willingness to involve children and teens in decision-making related to parenting strategies and discipline. Higher levels of parental control are indicative of authoritarian parenting, which emphasizes obedience without discussion between parent and child (Baumrind, 1996). Some Protestant Parenting Experts have emphasized the need for parents to insist upon immediate obedience from their children (Dobson, 1992; Ezzo & Bucknam, 1999; Tripp, 1995). Although participant responses to items related to Parental Control in this study indicated that participants were somewhat not sure as to when a child or teen develops the ability to collaborate with parents to create effective parenting strategies, over 64% indicated that they believed parent-child collaboration can be an appropriate method for generating parenting strategies.

Education level was identified as a significant and strong predictor of variability in responses related to discipline. Education level predicted 53% of the total variance in participant responses to discipline, specifically related to spanking. Results revealed that the less education a participant had, the higher the likelihood of utilizing spanking as a disciplinary approach.

Church location was identified as a significant and strong predictor, with a structure coefficient score of .756. The structure coefficient squared value ($r_s^2$=.571) indicated that in the presence of the other seven predictor variables, education level predicted 57% of the total variance in Factor 3. Results revealed that each church location had different mean scores, indicating a range from least amount of reported utilization of spanking as a disciplinary approach to most reported utilization of spanking as a disciplinary approach: (Church 3 (m=2.31), Church 1 (m=2.45), Church 2 (m=2.47), and Church 4 (m=2.90). Church 4 had the highest mean score, indicating that the individuals who participated in this research study from Church 4 reported more utilization of spanking as a disciplinary practice than individuals from the other three church locations. However, that does not necessarily indicate that participants from the other three church locations did not report high levels of spanking as part of their disciplinary practices.

Additionally, participants from Church 4 also reported the lowest educational level, which was a significant predictor of greater use of spanking as a disciplinary practice. Church 4 is located in a small, rural area, compared with participants from the other three churches, which are located in a large metropolitan area. Living in a rural area decreases an individual's likelihood of educational achievement and increases the

likelihood of dropping out of high school (Roscigno & Crowley, 2001). Also, the average income range for participants from Church 4 was significantly lower than the average income range for participants from the other three Churches. Fewer financial resources might result in participants from Church 4 having greater challenges in pursuing higher education. Therefore, the significance of church location as a predictor of disciplinary practices may be related to the income and education level of the participants.

Interestingly, Discipline was the only factor not predicted by the religious beliefs of participants. Therefore, in this study, conservative or moderate religious beliefs were predictive of the influence of religion on an individual's life and the emphasis of parental control on parenting, but were not significantly related to disciplinary practices, specifically spanking. This finding is contrary to other studies, which have asserted links among conservative Protestantism, parental control, and spanking. Researchers have indicated that conservative Protestant parents are more likely to utilize corporal punishment as a disciplinary tactic when compared to parents with more liberal religious beliefs or with no religious affiliation (Bartkowski, 1996; Ellison, 1996). Conservative Protestantism has been related to beliefs about children, including the belief that children are born with a sinful nature that necessitates the use of corporal punishment as part of discipline (Wilcox, 1998). Bartkowski and Xu (2000) discovered that Protestant fathers reportedly participated in statistically higher levels of rule-making and rule-enforcing behaviors with their children than did Catholic and nonreligious fathers.

Results of this study revealed that the majority (62%) of conservative Protestants either disagreed or strongly disagreed that spanking should always be utilized as part of discipline with young children. Nearly 76% disagreed or strongly disagreed that

spanking is best utilized as a disciplinary measure in response to all acts of disobedience by children, and 73% disagreed or strongly disagreed that spanking is a helpful disciplinary technique when utilized with older children and teens. It is possible that conservative Protestants utilize spanking as a disciplinary approach with children and believe that it is a necessary part of discipline with children, but may not be utilizing it with the frequency and rigor commonly assumed. Although they may use it as a means of asserting parental control, perhaps spanking is not their first or most emphasized means. Further research is needed to investigate these ideas.

Although no studies could be located that investigated the impact of corporal punishment on children from conservative Protestant families, studies have been conducted to investigate the impact of authoritarian discipline on children of differing cultural backgrounds. Slade and Wissow (2004) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between spanking very young children and later behavior problems upon entry into school. Researchers collected longitudinal data from interviews with mothers from the 1979-1998 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth Mother-Child Sample. Results indicated that among the full sample, spanking frequency was positively and significantly associated with children who required a parent-teacher meeting due to teacher-identified behavior problems. However, when the results were controlled for race and ethnicity, interesting differences emerged. Spanking frequency was significantly and positively related to identified behavior problems in White children, but was only slightly positive and not statistically significant in African American families, and was slightly negative and not statistically significant in Hispanic families. The

researchers postulated that these findings may have been due, in part, to a greater acceptance of spanking in these cultural groups (Slade & Wissow, 2004).

Rudy and Grusec (2006) noted similar findings in their investigation of the influence of cultural factors on parenting practices. Collectivist groups were defined as those who emphasize obedience and control in their child discipline practices, as well as interdependence among family members. Individualist groups were defined as those who emphasize autonomy, self-reliance, and self-interest in their child-rearing practices. Results indicated significantly higher levels of authoritarianism within the collectivist groups compared to the Individualist groups. Collectivist children's self-esteem scores were not significantly lower than their Individualist counterparts, even though their mothers supported an authoritarian approach to discipline. Researchers concluded that an authoritarian approach to discipline seems to hold differing, culture-laden meanings for both parents and children of Collectivist and Individualist groups (Rudy & Grusec, 2006). This finding supports Baumrind's (1997) charge for a culturally sensitive perspective when investigating the effects of corporal punishment on children. She indicated that cultural differences play a role in how the child perceives discipline. She emphasized that children internalize values of their culture and are therefore more accepting of disciplinary practices that are common within their cultural group than those outside the culture.

Some researchers have identified conservative Protestants as having the qualities of a unique cultural group (Sherkat, 2000). Although conservative Protestant parents have been found to value obedience and engage in the use of corporal punishment, both considered characteristics of authoritarian parenting (Baumrind,

1997), they also employ positive parenting, warmth, and affection (Bartkowski & Xu, 2000; Wilcox, 2002). These findings seem to support the idea that conservative Protestants make up a unique cultural group, with similarities to Collectivist groups, based upon the conservative Protestant emphasis on obedience and control in child discipline practices, as well as closeness and interdependence among family members.

Results of this study related to conservative Protestant Openness to Resources revealed that the predictor variables of gender, age, education level, age of oldest child, household income, church attendance, religious beliefs, and church location as a group predicted only a total of 1% of the variability within the factor. Therefore, these demographic variables cannot predict a large enough percentage of the variance within Openness to Resources for this researcher to use the data to make further implications. This finding made further analyses of the strength of individual predictors unimportant.

*Parenting Beliefs and Practices*

The following results of frequency and percentage scores for the participant responses to the PPI are discussed in light of the research questions in this study. The researcher identified Parenting Beliefs as theoretical statements about an individual's parenting philosophy, and Parenting Practices as actions a parent may take in response to his or her child or children. Parenting practices are often an outgrowth of beliefs and therefore may seem to fit into both categories. However, when ambiguities arose in the categorization process, items that contained information about parenting beliefs or practices in general were categorized as Parenting Beliefs (for example, item 23, "Older children and teens can play a useful role in helping their parents develop household rules and other parenting strategies") because, although a parent may have engaged in

a behavior as a result of this belief, the item was referring to parents in general, not "me, as a parent." Items that were phrased in a more personal way (for example, item 26, "I believe it is important for me to teach my children only one religious belief system and model how they should follow it") even though they contained the words "I believe" were categorized as Parenting Practices, because they included personal language, such as "me and my" and seemed to imply that the parent had actually engaged in a behavior.

*Beliefs*. Results of this study indicated that an overwhelming majority (79.2%) of participants mostly agreed or strongly agreed that parents should teach their children only one religious belief system and model how they should follow it. In addition, over 93% of the participants in this study mostly agreed or strongly agreed that parents should direct their children to follow the parents' religious beliefs. However, the majority (55.7%) also mostly agreed or strongly agreed that parents should expose their children to various religious belief systems to facilitate the development of their children's personal religious beliefs. When the researcher analyzed these items more closely, the agreement among them seemed to be related to conservative Protestant parents believing that parenting a child not only involves religious education but emphasizes it. Therefore, parents' beliefs about children and parenting overflow into their parenting practices. Not only do they seem to feel responsibility for teaching and passing on to their children one specific religious belief system that they believe to be true, they also want their children to be aware of other religious traditions. This may possibly be related to parents wanting to facilitate their children's understanding of similarities and differences among religious traditions.

Participants in this study were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement “Children are born with the tendency to do wrong." Some researchers have defined conservative Protestants as those adhering to an inerrant view of the Bible and agreeing with similar statements (Bartkowski & Wilcox, 2000; Wilcox, 1998). Additionally, comparable statements, such as “children are born with a sinful nature,” have been communicated through Protestant parenting manuals (Dobson, 1992; Ezzo & Bucknam, 1998). However, 31.1% mostly disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, which challenges past assumptions about conservative Protestants. Results of this study show that although the majority (61%) of participants in this study mostly agreed or strongly agreed with this commonly communicated belief, the practice of identifying conservative Protestants by their agreement with the preceding statements may be inaccurate.

Participants in this study responded to items related to the use of discipline techniques, specifically spanking. More than 62% mostly disagreed or strongly disagreed that spanking should always be utilized as part of discipline with young children and nearly 76% strongly disagreed or mostly disagreed that spanking is best utilized as a disciplinary measure in response to all acts of disobedience by children. Additionally, 78.5% of participants in this study mostly disagreed or strongly disagreed that spanking is equally useful as a disciplinary technique for both young children and teenagers. These results revealed inconsistencies in several areas.

This researcher’s thorough investigation of conservative Protestants and disciplinary practices in the professional literature revealed general similarities. Specifically, in the professional literature, researchers seem to focus specifically on

spanking when investigating disciplinary measures used by conservative Protestants (Dyslin & Thomsen, 2005), thus alluding to the idea that this group of individuals emphasizes spanking and utilizes it as a primary disciplinary tool. In the popular literature, although authors of Protestant parenting manuals indicate that spanking is only one of many useful parenting tools, they focus attention on describing the importance of spanking, the rationale for spanking, and how to administer a spanking, leading to the conclusion that spanking is something that parents should be prepared to utilize at any moment and be able to provide a strong rationale for doing so (Dobson, 1992; Ezzo & Bucknam, 1999; Tripp, 1995). Outside the written literature,the topic of spanking typically generates polarized discussions in social, educational, and professional settings, and it would seem logical that strong opinions expressed in conversations would transfer into the manner in which parents implement the use of spanking.

However, the results of this study reveal more moderate opinions and uses of spanking as a disciplinary approach among conservative Protestants. Although conservative Protestants often accept the biblical teaching that children are born with a sinful nature that necessitates the use of corporal punishment as part of child discipline (Wilcox, 1998) and have been found to be more likely to utilize corporal punishment as a disciplinary tactic when compared to parents with more liberal religious beliefs and those with no religious affiliation (Bartkowski, 1996; Ellison, 1996), they seem not to agree with the use of corporal punishment in response to all acts of child disobedience or implementing discipline without a rationale. The current research findings revealed information about what parents believe in regard to spanking; however because of the

fact that specific questions were not asked regarding spanking practices, it can only be assumed that conservative Protestants' spanking practices are similar to their beliefs about spanking.

Results of this study indicated that 47% of the participants mostly disagreed or strongly disagreed with the idea that elementary school-age children have the ability to contribute ideas to help parents develop useful parenting strategies. However, in response to an almost identical question, 59.1% of participants indicated that elementary school-age children do have the ability to help parents generate ideas that are useful for effective parenting.

Results of participant responses in this study revealed that 69.2% mostly agreed or strongly agreed that older children and teens can play a useful role in helping their parents develop household rules and other parenting strategies. In addition, 64.4% of participants mostly disagreed or strongly disagreed that, regardless of age, it is inappropriate for children to collaborate with their parents to generate parenting strategies. Results of the preceding items seem to indicate that the majority of participants, although believing that parent-child collaboration regarding parenting may be appropriate in some instances, were uncertain as to a child or teenager's ability to play a useful role in collaboration efforts. Although no conclusive evidence exists to support this statement, it can be assumed that uncertainty regarding a child's ability to collaborate with a parent or the usefulness of parent-child collaboration related to parenting strategies would be translated into inconsistent implementation. Still, participants in this study seemed to be aware of developmental differences in their children, and their responses indicated that they modify their parenting practices in

reaction. These results appear to be consistent with participants' responses regarding discipline in that 78.5% mostly disagreed or strongly disagreed that spanking is equally useful as a disciplinary technique for both young children and teenagers. Similarities exist in Protestant parenting manuals, which put forth different disciplinary strategies for use with children and teenagers. Many describe a change in appropriate discipline strategies and level of parental authority and influence as children move into their teen years, indicating a response to developmental differences (Dobson, 1992; Ezzo & Bucknam, 1999; Tripp, 1995).

*Practices*. Results indicated that over 65% of participants in the study actively seek out only biblically-based resources when they encounter parenting difficulties. Although just over 48% indicated that they were not open to gaining parenting knowledge from nonreligious experts in the field of parenting, 21.5% indicated that they were not sure. The overall responses indicate varying opinions. Therefore, whereas participants indicated that they might be open to gaining parenting knowledge from a nonreligious parenting expert, the majority were not likely to seek out nonreligious resources.

Similarly, results of the multiple regression analysis on Influence of Religion revealed that the more religiously conservative a participant, the stronger the influence of religion on his or her parenting beliefs and practices, and that the more times a week an individual attends church, the stronger the influence of religion on his or her parenting beliefs and practices. Presumably, because the more conservative the individual and the more frequently that individual attends church, the greater the influence of religion on his or her parenting beliefs and practices, the more likely it is

that an individual will seek only parenting resources that are consistent with his or her religious beliefs and practices.

Participant responses to items related to degree of comfort with religiously different individuals yielded conflicting results. Although the majority (61.7%) of participants indicated that they do not have difficulty feeling like they could really connect with people who have different religious beliefs than their own, a small majority (51.7%) indicated that they had not experienced feeling really connected with one or more people who have religious beliefs different from their own. This conflict may be associated with some items in the PPI addressing general aspects of interpersonal relationships and others that address participants' actual experiences with religiously different people. It is possible that the participants feel comfortable with the thought of connecting with religiously different people, but do not frequently choose to associate or pursue relationships with religiously different people. Support for this idea could come from the stark contradiction in participant responses to items 16 and 25, in which almost 80% of participants indicated that they were not able to interact comfortably with people who have religious beliefs different from their own and 79% indicated that they are usually not uncomfortable interacting with religiously different individuals in social settings.

*Conservative Protestant Parents and CPRT*

Results of this study have important implications for child parent relationship therapy, which is not identified as a religiously-based parenting resource (Landreth & Bratton, 2006). Although leaders of CPRT groups could be affiliated with a conservative Protestant religious tradition, this is not a requirement. Although this type of leader

could integrate his or her beliefs while leading a CPRT group, the format of CPRT was not set up to accommodate this modification. child parent relationship therapy groups can be conducted in many types of locations, including counseling offices, counseling clinics, schools, and churches (Landreth & Bratton, 2006). Conducting CPRT groups in churches may increase the likelihood that conservative Protestant would participate; however, the results of this study indicated that conservative Protestants might still be reluctant, because the majority of participants in this study indicated that they seek out only biblically-based resources when they encounter parenting difficulties.

One of the strengths of CPRT is the group teaching format, which often gives rise to a support group environment that facilitates relationship building among parents, support, and mutual understanding (Landreth & Bratton, 2006). For individuals who view religious differences as an impediment to connecting with others, a religiously heterogeneous group may not be beneficial. However, the format of CPRT could easily accommodate a religiously homogeneous group of parents.

Results of this study revealed that the more religiously conservative a participant, the more the participant believed that parental control should be used in parenting. In contrast, a strong emphasis in CPRT is the importance of parents creating an environment of permissiveness for their children during 30-minute special playtimes. Landreth (2002) outlined the philosophy of child centered play therapy (Axline, 1969), which offers the underlying principles of CPRT (Landreth & Bratton, 2006). A summary of some of the principles include trusting a child's inner intuitive wisdom, which allows him or her to naturally grow in positive ways; believing that children are capable of

positive self-direction; and allowing children the freedom to direct their own play during special playtimes by refraining from directing them in any way.

Although the researcher could locate no past studies that investigated philosophical and cultural conflicts between CPRT and conservative Protestant beliefs, Solis et al. (2004) conducted a qualitative study to investigate the cultural acceptability of filial therapy with an African American mother. The participant reported increases in personal awareness, empathy, and reflections on her parenting skills. Additionally, she indicated having some difficulty accepting the principles of filial therapy, including the importance of creating a permissive, unconditionally accepting, and nondirective atmosphere during her playtimes with her child (Solis et al., 2004). Similar attitudes might arise from conservative Protestants who participate in CPRT without cultural modifications.

Conflicts exist between the conservative Protestant link with parental control (found in this study) and the philosophical underpinnings of CPRT that emphasize parental permissiveness. In CPRT a participant's reluctance or refusal to create a permissive environment for their child during special playtimes could significantly impede their ability to benefit from CPRT and could affect other participants' experiences. Therefore, finding a way to reconcile these differences is an important part of making CPRT amenable to conservative Protestants. Emphasizing the limited nature and duration of playtimes and clarifying that the permissive environment exists only during playtimes may assist CPRT leaders who conduct CPRT with conservative Protestants, who hold to strong beliefs concerning parental control.

From the results of this study, it is possible to assume that a religiously conservative individual may have difficulty participating in a CPRT group due to the fairly dramatic contrast in beliefs regarding parental control. The current CPRT format encourages parents to create an environment of permissiveness in a limited nature (for only 30 minutes once a week). Even within a limited structure, a conservative Protestant may have difficulty accepting the usefulness of this process.

Child parent relationship therapy does not focus on discipline strategies as a way to change problematic behaviors in children, and it does not support the use of punitive disciplinary practices. Instead, it focuses on enhancing the parent-child relationship, which often results in a decrease in a child's need to express behaviors viewed by parents as problematic. In addition, CPRT instructs parents in the use of limit-setting, according to the ACT format: A-Acknowledge the feeling, C-communicate the limit, and T-target an alternative (Landreth & Bratton, 2006). This process allows parents to communicate acceptance to their children while educating them about permissible behaviors.

The majority of participants in this study disagreed with the idea that spanking is the best response to all acts of child disobedience and that spanking should be utilized as part of discipline with all young children. Therefore, it is presumable that conservative Protestants might find the ACT model of limit-setting acceptable. Additionally, Landreth and Bratton (2006) encouraged the use of developmentally appropriate limits with children, stating that little children can be expected to be responsible for small choices, whereas older children can be expected to be responsible for larger or more significant choices.

Results of this study indicated that participants would accept parenting approaches that are developmentally responsive. However, a point of possible contention does exist between conservative Protestants and their acceptance of CPRT. The majority (96%) of parents in this study mostly agreed or strongly agreed that effective discipline does not need to include discussions between parent and child about why the disciplinary action was necessary. Although the CPRT curriculum does not explicitly state that parents should discuss disciplinary actions with their children, the essence of CPRT supports an empathic relationship between parent and child. This involves open communication, mutual respect, expression of feelings, and unconditional acceptance. These are highlighted in the ACT model of limit-setting. Parents begin the process of educating their children regarding the permissibility of behaviors by first acknowledging and accepting their children's desire to do something impermissible. This format of limit-setting seems to provide children with an explanation of why limit-setting is necessary and, thus, could be considered unacceptable to conservative Protestant parents.

*Implications for CPRT*

Sweeney et al. (2000) advocated the use of filial therapy with Christian parents, pointing out that effective biblically-based discipline must begin with a strong parent-child relationship. A study by Wilcox (1998) revealed that children's psychological health is dependent upon a good relationship with their parents. The question remains as to whether CPRT is a useful relationship-enhancing tool for conservative Protestant parents.

Results from this study indicated that whereas a few participants (30.2%) might be open to gaining parenting knowledge from a nonreligious parenting expert, the majority are not likely to seek out non-religious resources on their own or be open to gaining knowledge from nonbiblical sources. These results have important implications for CPRT, which is not a religiously based parenting resource and does not require leaders to have a religious background (Landreth & Bratton, 2006). Training conservative Protestant mental health professionals to be CPRT leaders seems to be a necessary step in serving this population. The integration of biblical teachings could possibly make CPRT more appealing as a plausible parenting resource for conservative Protestants. The integration of biblical and psychological principles in parenting literature is not an innovative idea.

Upon an investigation of popular Protestant parenting literature, Boggs (1983) discovered that even as far back as the 1960s, Protestant parenting experts have integrated psychological principles and behavioral science into their literature, such as refraining from verbal threats and physical violence, modeling positive behaviors for children, and respecting the inherent worth of all human beings (Boggs, 1983). Additionally, Kelly (1987) developed a parenting curriculum for parents who desire to use the Bible as their foundation for parenting. Kelly integrated concepts of Individual Psychology and mainstream literature regarding children and parenting while maintaining that Christian parenting must include biblical concepts that are unique compared to secular principles and most other religions (Kelly, 1987).

Results of this study revealed that the majority of conservative Protestants in this study seek out biblically-based parenting resources, feel a responsibility to teach their

children religious and spiritual truths, and believe it is important to teach their children only one religious belief system and model how to follow it. Therefore, in addition to training conservative Protestant mental health professionals to lead CPRT groups, the necessity of integrating conservative Protestant religious beliefs into the CPRT curriculum is apparent. Results of this study seem to confirm that conservative Protestants are parenting in ways that are predominantly in agreement with the parenting directives put forth in Protestant parenting manuals. Therefore, these resources, in addition to findings from this study, would be appropriate resources to utilize when making modifications to CPRT.

Additionally, because high levels of church attendance were related to a high influence of religion on parenting beliefs and practices in this study, acceptance of CPRT may also be enhanced by conducting groups in churches. Conservative Protestants are frequently at church, so conducting groups in churches would seem to be beneficial in terms of convenience and familiarity. In addition, creating religiously homogenous CPRT groups may assist conservative Protestants in being able to comfortably interact with other parents and take advantage of the benefits of group administration of CPRT.

In attempting to asses level of conservatism in an individual, CPRT leaders, as well as mental health professionals in general, may benefit most from asking CPRT participants or clients to describe their religious beliefs as conservative, moderate, or liberal, as was done in this study. In a previous study conducted by Wilcox (1998), results indicated that conservatism (related to an individual's identification with beliefs about children and God) was more predictive of differences in physical and verbal

expressions of approval than attendance and participation in a conservative Protestant church.

Results from this study indicated that less educated participants engaged in higher levels of spanking. Because of the emphasis on permissiveness in CPRT, participants may question the compatibility of CPRT with spanking, if they use this disciplinary measure. Recommendations that may assist leaders in working through questions and conflicts related to spanking include the following: (a) focus on CPRT as a relationship-enhancing tool that often results in decreases in problematic behaviors and, thus, less need for punishment; (b) educate participants on the empirical findings related to spanking, such as the meta-analysis by Paolucci and Violato (2004); and (c) become familiar with Protestant parenting manuals that condone the use of spanking in order to ensure quality recommendations to CPRT participants. In addition, CPRT leaders need to recognize educational level and present information in a manner easily understood by participants. This may involve reading and summarizing both professional and popular literature and communicating that information through the use of easy-to-read-and-understand outlines, charts, or hand outs.

In response to differing results concerning conservative Protestant beliefs regarding corporal punishment, Lowe (1998) concluded that mental health professionals and child specialists who work within the Christian population must be vigilant not only to provide sound research findings to parents on the topic of corporal punishment but also to remain sensitive to their often diverse and strongly held values and beliefs. McCreary (1998) responded by challenging professionals to create value-responsive parent training opportunities. He also acknowledged the importance of taking values,

culture, and attitudes into consideration when attempting to motivate parents (McCreary, 1998).

Both APA and ACA ethical codes emphasize the importance of working with all individuals in a respectful and non judgmental manner (ACA, 2005; APA, 2002). Researchers have highlighted the need to gain a respectful understanding and appreciation of different cultures, which includes different religious affiliations (Sue et al., 1999; Westwood & Ishiyama, 1990). Even if CPRT leaders and group members have similar religious backgrounds, beliefs and opinions can still differ greatly. Authors of the ACA code require counselors to respect differences by taking action to understand the cultural perspectives of their clients (ACA, 2005).

## Limitations of This Study and Suggestions for Future Research

In response to previous research, one of the purposes of this study was to gain information about conservative Protestant parenting beliefs and practices. Although that has been achieved, additional research is needed in order to create a full picture of conservative Protestants and refute biases in the literature. This study also created a tool to assist other researchers in working toward accomplishing this task.

The researcher used the opinions of Protestant parenting experts to develop items on the questionnaire instead of the opinions of Protestant parents due to the dearth of information regarding the beliefs and practices of this population. However, this fact only supports the need for continued research to investigate the opinions and beliefs of individuals who identify themselves as Protestant, Christian, and/or religious conservatives. Because participants in this research study were sampled from Southern Baptist churches, the results of this study cannot be generalized to all

conservative Protestants. In addition, because the researcher collected data from individuals who were in attendance at Bible study classes, it is possible that individuals who attend Southern Baptist churches, but do not attend Bible study classes were not represented in this study.

Because this researcher developed the PPI for use in this study, the factor analysis was conducted on the same sample in which the results were taken. Additional administrations of the PPI to similar samples would help to clarify reliability and establish external validity, as well as provide an opportunity to establish construct validity through the utilization of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (Gall et al., 2003; Hair et al., 2006). Administering the PPI to other conservative Protestants as well as diverse populations of moderate and liberal Protestants would help to identify differences among the groups.

Even with the implementation of recommendations for conducting CPRT with conservative Protestants, it is unknown whether the adaptations to CPRT in the way of integrating biblical principles, training conservative Protestants to lead CPRT groups, creating religiously homogenous groups, and conducting groups in conservative Protestant churches will make CPRT more amenable to conservative Protestants. In addition, although this researcher has made suggestions for modifications to CPRT that are responsive to Protestant parenting beliefs and practices, irreconcilable differences between CPRT and Protestant parenting beliefs may exist. Differences related to the inherent nature of children and the need for permissiveness, or parental control in child-rearing seem to be most at-odds. Therefore, recommendations for future research include a comparison of differences between CPRT groups conducted in the traditional

way with conservative Protestants and CPRT groups conducted using the recommendations in this study. In order to gain additional information related to the usefulness of CPRT with conservative Protestants, comparisons between both types of CPRT administration and other biblically-based parenting curricula should be made.

# APPENDIX A

## RECRUITMENT OF PARTICIPANTS SCRIPTS

# Telephone Script for Site Recruitment

Researcher:

Hello, my name is Tracy McClung. I am a graduate student at University of North Texas pursuing a doctoral degree in Counseling. I am currently working on my dissertation, a study entitiled, An Investigation of Parenting Beliefs and Practices.

The purpose of my research study is to collect information from parents regarding their parenting beliefs and practices and use this information to make any necessary modifications to a current parenting curriculum. Ideally, this information will help mental health professionals meet the needs of parents and more effectively communicate useful parenting strategies.

I'd like to invite you to help me with my study. I need to recruit participants who would be willing to take a short survey that will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. I would like the opportunity to recruit them from your church during Bible classes on a Sunday morning. Would you be willing to give me this opportunity?

(If he/she answers no, thank them and hang up. If he/she says yes, or maybe, pending answers to questions, continue. Answer any questions posed at this point.)

Let me tell you about how I will collect information from participants. First, I will pass out an informed consent form, which describes the purpose and benefits of my study, as well as the steps I will take to ensure the confidentiality of all participants. I will then pass out a short survey, which includes items about the demographics of participants (age, education level, number of children, etc.) and parenting beliefs and practices.

In order for me to move forward in working with you, I will need you to send me a letter, signed and dated, on your church's letterhead, stating that you give me, Tracy McClung, the approval to collect data for my dissertation at your church. Would you be willing to do this? (if yes, continue, if no, thank them and hang up).

Do you have any additional questions? (if "yes" answer them, if no, thank them and schedule a time for data collection)

## Recruitment of Participants Script

Hello, my name is Tracy McClung. I am a graduate student at University of North Texas pursuing a doctoral degree in Counseling. I am currently working on my dissertation, a study entitled, An Investigation of Parenting Beliefs and Practices.

The purpose of my research study is to collect information from parents regarding their parenting beliefs and practices and use this information to make any necessary modifications to a current parenting curriculum. Ideally, this information will help mental health professionals meet the needs of parents and more effectively communicate useful parenting strategies.

I'd like to invite you to help me with my study. I hope you will be willing to fill out an informed consent form that will briefly explain the study, the costs and benefits, and the measures I will take to ensure your confidentiality, and take a short survey that will require approximately 15 minutes of your time to complete. The only requirements for participation are you must be a parent of at least one child, regardless of his or her age, and you must be willing to complete the informed consent form and survey in person within the time we have allotted today. You are not required to participate. If you choose to participate, you can change your mind at any time while completing the informed consent form and the survey. Does anyone have any questions? *I will answer all questions posed at this point.* If you would like to participate, please indicate so by raising your hand.

*Next, I will pass out the informed consent form and survey to all who wish to participate*.

# APPENDIX B

## PPI DRAFTS USED IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF PILOT TEST ONE, PILOT TEST TWO, AND THE FINAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE PPI

# An Investigation of Parenting Beliefs and Practices

Demographics:

1. Your gender (circle one): Male Female
2. Your age (circle one): under 20 20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60-69 70+
3. Highest level of education completed (circle one)

   Some High School High School graduate Some college

   Bachelor's degree Master's degree Doctoral degree
4. Your ethnicity (circle one) Hispanic African American White (non-Hispanic)

   Asian Biracial Other_____
5. Genders and ages of your child or children:
6. Location of residence (circle one) Urban Suburban Rural
7. Total household income range last year (circle one) Less than $30,000

   $30,001 - $50,000

   $50,001 - $80,000

   $80,100 +
8. How often do you attend church services? (circle one)

   Never Several times a year monthly weekly more than once a week

9. Within your denomination, which of the following best describes you? (circle one)

   Conservative Moderate Liberal

**Please respond to the items below by circling one of the following options.**
**1= Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not sure 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree**

1. Children must be taught what is right and what is wrong.
   Strongly Disagree Disagree Not sure Agree Strongly Agree
   1 2 3 4 5

2. Children will talk about things that are important to them.
   Strongly Disagree Disagree Not sure Agree Strongly Agree
   1 2 3 4 5

3. When children are young, parents should direct their children to follow the parents' religious beliefs.
   Strongly Disagree Disagree Not sure Agree Strongly Agree
   1 2 3 4 5

4. Children are born with the tendency to grow and develop in positive ways.
   Strongly Disagree Disagree Not sure Agree Strongly Agree
   1 2 3 4 5

5. When I experience parenting difficulties with my child, I am likely to seek help from a Biblically-based authority only.
   Strongly Disagree Disagree Not sure Agree Strongly Agree
   1 2 3 4 5

6. When disciplining my children, I emphasize the need for their immediate compliance.
   Strongly Disagree Disagree Not sure Agree Strongly Agree
   1 2 3 4 5

7. I have a difficult time feeling like I can really connect with people who have different religious beliefs than mine.
   Strongly Disagree Disagree Not sure Agree Strongly Agree
   1 2 3 4 5

8. As a parent, I strive to promote independence in my children.
   Strongly Disagree Disagree Not sure Agree Strongly Agree
   1 2 3 4 5

9. Part of my role as a parent is to allow my child to develop his or her own religious beliefs.
   Strongly Disagree Disagree Not sure Agree Strongly Agree
   1 2 3 4 5

10. My children can contribute ideas about consequences to help me, as a parent, develop positive discipline strategies.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

11. I believe that only someone with similar religious beliefs to my own would be able to give me useful parenting advice.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

12. As a parent, I believe spanking should be utilized as part of discipline with children.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

13. Play is the way young children communicate their thoughts and feelings.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

14. It is my responsibility as a parent to teach my child religious and spiritual truths.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

15. Children are born with a sinful nature and prone to self-destruction.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

16. When I encounter parenting difficulties, I seek out a variety of parenting resources, both non-religious and Biblically-based.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

17. It is my primary responsibility as a parent to ensure that my children are obedient to authority figures.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

18. I find myself being able to interact comfortably with people who have different religious beliefs than my own.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

19. Children do not have the ability to generate ideas for consequences that are useful for effective discipline.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

20. As a parent, I believe spanking is an unacceptable form of discipline.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

21. I am open to gaining parenting knowledge from experts in the field of parenting.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

22. It is an important part of my role as a parent to offer my children the opportunity to make choices for themselves.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

23. Children should be exposed to various religious beliefs to develop their own belief systems.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

24. Children possess an inner wisdom about good and bad.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

# An Investigation of Parenting Beliefs and Practices

**Please answer the following questions:**

1. Your gender (circle one):
   - Male
   - Female
2. Your age (circle one):
   - Under 20
   - 20-29
   - 30-39
   - 40-49
   - 50-59
   - 60-69
   - 70+
3. Highest level of education completed (circle one):
   - Some High School
   - High School graduate
   - Some college
   - Associate's degree
   - Bachelor's degree
   - Advanced degree
4. Your ethnicity (circle one):
   - Hispanic
   - African American
   - White (non-Hispanic)
   - Asian
   - Biracial/Multiracial
   - Other_____
5. Genders and ages of your child or children (write in gender and age of additional children in the space to the right.)

   Gender_____ Age_____

   Gender_____ Age_____

   Gender_____ Age_____

   Gender_____ Age_____

6. Location of residence (circle one):

Urban

Suburban

Rural

7. Total household income range last year (circle one):

Less than $30,000

$30,001 - $50,000

$50,001 - $80,000

$80,100 +

9. How often do you participate in church-related activities? (circle one):

Never/rarely

Several times a year

Monthly

Weekly

More than once a week

9. Which denomination best describes your religious affiliation? (circle one):

Baptist

Catholic

Church of Christ

Lutheran

Methodist

Other _____

10. WITHIN your denomination, which of the following best describes your religious beliefs? (circle one):

Conservative

Moderate

Liberal

**Please respond to the items below by circling one of the following options.**
**1= Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Not sure 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree**

1. Children must be taught what is right and what is wrong.
   Strongly Disagree Mostly Disagree Not sure Mostly Agree Strongly Agree
   1 2 3 4 5

2. Young children communicate their thoughts and feelings mainly through verbalizations.
   Strongly Disagree Disagree Not sure Agree Strongly Agree
   1 2 3 4 5

3. Parents should direct their children to follow the parents' religious beliefs.
   Strongly Disagree Disagree Not sure Agree Strongly Agree
   1 2 3 4 5

4. From birth, children naturally develop in positive ways, self-enhancing ways.
   Strongly Disagree Disagree Not sure Agree Strongly Agree
   1 2 3 4 5

5. When I experience parenting difficulties with my child, I am likely to seek help from ONLY a Biblically-based resource.
   Strongly Disagree Disagree Not sure Agree Strongly Agree
   1 2 3 4 5

6. When disciplining my children, I often demand their immediate obedience.
   Strongly Disagree Disagree Not sure Agree Strongly Agree
   1 2 3 4 5

7. I have a difficult time feeling like I can REALLY CONNECT with people who have different religious beliefs than mine.
   Strongly Disagree Disagree Not sure Agree Strongly Agree
   1 2 3 4 5

8. I allow my children the freedom to question what they are being taught.
   Strongly Disagree Disagree Not sure Agree Strongly Agree
   1 2 3 4 5

9. It is NOT an important part of my role as a parent to teach my child religious and spiritual truths.
   Strongly Disagree Disagree Not sure Agree Strongly Agree
   1 2 3 4 5

10. Elementary school-age children have the ability to contribute ideas to help parents develop useful parenting strategies.
    Strongly Disagree Disagree Not sure Agree Strongly Agree
    1 2 3 4 5

11. I believe that ONLY someone with similar religious beliefs to my own would be able to give me useful parenting advice.
    Strongly Disagree Disagree Not sure Agree Strongly Agree
    1 2 3 4 5

12. As a parent, I believe spanking should ALWAYS be utilized as part of discipline with young children.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

13. Young children communicate their thoughts and feelings primarily through their behaviors.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

14. It is my responsibility, as a parent, to teach my children religious and spiritual truths.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

15. Children are born with the tendency toward evil.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

16. When I encounter parenting difficulties, I seek out a variety of parenting resources, both non-religious and Biblically-based.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

17. I believe it is important for parents to teach their children to be obedient to authority figures, regardless of how the children feel about the authority figures.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

18. I find myself being able to interact comfortably with people who have different religious beliefs than my own.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

19. Children between the ages of approximately 6 and 10 do NOT have the ability to help parents generate ideas that are useful for effective parenting.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

20. As a parent, I believe spanking is a useful disciplinary technique when utilized with older children and teen-agers.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

21. I am open to gaining parenting knowledge from NON-religious experts in the field of parenting.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

22. It is an important part of my role as a parent to offer my children the opportunity to make choices for themselves.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

23. Parents should expose their children to various religious belief systems to facilitate the development of their children's personal religious beliefs.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

24. Children are born with a natural potential to discern what is good from what is bad.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

25. Parents should allow their children the freedom to develop their own religious beliefs.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

26. As a parent, I believe my parenting strategies will work with my children, regardless of their ages.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

27. Older children and teens can play a useful role in helping their parents develop household rules and other parenting strategies.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

28. I believe spanking is a harmful disciplinary technique for use with pre-teens and teen-agers.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

29. In social settings, I am usually UNcomfortable interacting with individuals whose religious beliefs differ from mine.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

30. I believe it is important for me to teach my children ONLY ONE religious belief system, and model for them to follow it.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

31. As my child ages, I alter my parenting strategies.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

32. As a parent, I believe it is important to encourage children to be respectful of authority figures, but to challenge their authorities when they disagree with them.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

33. When children misbehave, it is important to allow them some time to bring themselves into compliance with the rules.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

34. One of my good friends has religious beliefs that differ from my own.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

35. I tend to discourage my children from challenging the legitimacy of things they have been taught.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

36. Regardless of age, it is inappropriate for children to collaborate with their parents to generate parenting strategies.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

37. As a parent, I believe that spanking CAN be a useful disciplinary technique with young children, but its usefulness is dependent upon the child.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

38. As a parent, I believe that giving my children the opportunity to make choices for themselves works against my parenting approach.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

39. As a parent, I believe spanking is BEST utilized for acts of willful defiance ONLY.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

40. Spanking is most beneficial when utilized as the primary disciplinary technique for correcting behaviors.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

41. In order to discipline a child effectively, a parent must include a discussion about why the disciplinary action was necessary.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

42. For discipline to be successful, it is NOT necessary for parents to provide children with an explanation for their disciplinary actions.

| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

# An Investigation of Parenting Beliefs and Practices

**Please answer the following questions:**

1. Your gender (circle one):

   Male

   Female

2. Your age (circle one):

   18-19

   20-29

   30-39

   40-49

   50-59

   60-69

   70+

3. Highest level of education completed (circle one):

   Some High School

   High School graduate

   Some college

   Associate's degree

   Bachelor's degree

   Advanced degree

4. Your ethnicity (circle one):

   Hispanic

   African American

   White (non-Hispanic)

   Asian

   Biracial/Multiracial

   Other_____

5. Genders and ages of your child or children (write in gender and age of additional children in the space to the right.)

   Gender_____ Age_____

   Gender_____ Age_____

   Gender_____ Age_____

   Gender_____ Age_____

6. Location of residence (circle one):

    Urban

    Suburban

    Rural

7. Total household income range last year (circle one):

    Less than $30,000

    $30,001 - $50,000

    $50,001 - $80,000

    $80,100 +

8. How often do you participate in church-related activities? (circle one):

    Never/rarely

    Several times a year

    Monthly

    Weekly

    More than once a week

9. Which denomination best describes your religious affiliation? (circle one):

    Baptist

    Catholic

    Church of Christ

    Lutheran

    Methodist

    Non-denominational

    Presbyterian

    Other _____

10. WITHIN your denomination, which of the following best describes your religious beliefs? (circle one):

    Conservative

    Moderate

    Liberal

**Please respond to the items below by circling one of the following options:**
**1=Strongly Disagree 2 =Mostly Disagree 3 =Not sure 4 =Mostly Agree 5 =Strongly Agree**

1. Children must be taught what is right and what is wrong.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

2. Parents should direct their children to follow the parents' religious beliefs.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

3. Children naturally develop in positive ways and seek self-improvement.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

4. When I experience parenting difficulties with my child, I am likely to seek help from ONLY a Biblically-based resource.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

5. When children misbehave, I believe it is important that they bring themselves into compliance with the rules immediately.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

6. I have a difficult time feeling like I can REALLY CONNECT with people who have different religious beliefs from mine.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

7. I allow my children the freedom to question what they are being taught.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

8. It is NOT an important part of my role as a parent to teach my child religious and spiritual truths.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

9. Elementary school-age children have the ability to contribute ideas to help parents develop useful parenting strategies.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

10. I believe that ONLY someone with similar religious beliefs to my own would be able to give me useful parenting advice.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

11. As a parent, I believe spanking should ALWAYS be utilized as part of discipline with young children.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

12. As a parent, I believe spanking is BEST utilized as a disciplinary measure in response to all acts of disobedience by children.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

13. Children are born with the tendency to do wrong.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

14. When I encounter parenting difficulties, I seek out a variety of parenting resources, both non-religious and Biblically-based.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

15. I believe it is important for parents to teach their children to be obedient to authority figures, regardless of how the children feel about the authority figures.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

16. I find myself being able to interact comfortably with people who have different religious beliefs from my own.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

17. Children between the ages of approximately 6 and 10 do NOT have the ability to help parents generate ideas that are useful for effective parenting.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

18. As a parent, I believe spanking is a useful disciplinary technique when utilized with older children and teen-agers.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

19. I am open to gaining parenting knowledge from NON-religious experts in the field of parenting.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

20. For discipline to be successful, it is NOT necessary for parents to provide children with an explanation for their disciplinary actions.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

21. Children are born with a natural potential to discern what is good from what is bad.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

22. Parents should allow their children the freedom to develop their own religious beliefs.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

23. Older children and teens can play a useful role in helping their parents develop household rules and other parenting strategies.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

24. As a parent, I believe spanking is EQUALLY USEFUL as a disciplinary technique for both young children AND teen-agers.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

25. In social settings, I am usually UNcomfortable interacting with individuals whose religious beliefs differ from mine.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

26. I believe it is important for me to teach my children ONLY ONE religious belief system, and model how they should follow it.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

27. As a parent, I believe it is important to encourage children to be respectful of authority figures, but to challenge their authorities when they disagree with them.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

28. When children misbehave, it is important to allow them some time to bring themselves into compliance with the rules.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

29. I have experienced feeling REALLY CONNECTED with one or more people who have religious beliefs that differ from my own.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

30. I tend to discourage my children from challenging the legitimacy of things they have been taught.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

31. Regardless of age, it is INappropriate for children to collaborate with their parents to generate parenting strategies.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

32. As a parent, I believe the usefulness of spanking, as a disciplinary measure, is dependent upon the child.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

33. As a parent, I believe spanking is BEST utilized as a disciplinary measure for acts of willful defiance ONLY.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

34. It is my responsibility, as a parent, to teach my children religious and spiritual truths.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

35. In order to discipline a child effectively, a parent should include a discussion about why the disciplinary action was necessary.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

36. Parents should expose their children to various religious belief systems to facilitate the development of their children's personal religious beliefs.

| Strongly Disagree | Mostly Disagree | Not sure | Mostly Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

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